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MEDIEVAL SUPERWOMAN?



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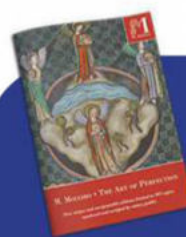


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WELCOME

CHRISTMAS 2019

“ Britain’s history is often divided into neat sections, separated by dates such as 1485 or 1901, when people apparently decided to stop being medieval or Victorian and embrace the new way of things. One of the most dramatic junctures is AD 410, traditionally seen as the **end of the Roman era** and the start of what was once widely known as ‘the Dark Ages’. But, as with all such dates, the reality was rather more complex. In our cover feature, Will Bowden considers what really happened when the legions departed. You’ll find that on page 20.

There is complexity too in the story of **Eleanor of Aquitaine** – the medieval queen consort whose remarkable life has inspired numerous legends: serial adulterer, scheming rebel, and 12th-century superwoman, to name just a few. On page 34, Sara Cockerill revisits and reinterrogates these myths. If you enjoy this piece, then look out for the **podcast interview** that Sara recorded for us with fellow historian Dan Jones. That will be available soon at historyextra.com/podcast.

Finally, as this is our Christmas issue, you’ll find plenty of festive treats inside including our round-up of the year’s best books (page 66) and our Christmas quiz and crossword (pages 92 and 94). Even if you’re feeling Scroogish, you’ll no doubt enjoy our piece on unexpected festive customs (page 57), where the traditional yuletide adornments are replaced by **snow turds, evil robins and killer frogs**.

However you’re planning to celebrate, I hope you have a very enjoyable Christmas.

Rob Attar
Editor



THIS ISSUE’S CONTRIBUTORS



Will Bowden

Although, as an archaeologist, I’ve dug on a number of sites across the Mediterranean, I’m still always drawn back to this small island on the very edge of the Roman empire.

Will explores what happened in Britain as Roman rule collapsed and the legions left on page 20



Sara Cockerill

While I was writing about Eleanor of Aquitaine for this issue, I was surprised to keep finding other women exercising real power during the Middle Ages – none of whom have anything like Eleanor’s profile.

Sara busts some of the myths surrounding the ‘medieval superwoman’ on page 34



Caitlin Green

The evidence for long-distance travel and trade in the Middle Ages is fascinating, and the establishment of a ‘New England’ on the Black Sea by exiles fleeing the Norman conquest is a great example of this.

Caitlin shares the surprising story of an 11th-century Crimean colony founded by English refugees on page 43

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CONTENTS

CHRISTMAS 2019

FEATURES

20 The fall of Roman Britain

Will Bowden reveals how life changed for Britons when the legions departed

29 Einstein on the run

The physicist was given a rapturous reception when he fled to Britain in 1933, writes Andrew Robinson

34 Eleanor of Aquitaine

Sara Cockerill explodes some of the myths that have grown up around the famed medieval queen

43 A medieval new England

Caitlin Green tells the remarkable story of the 11th-century exiles who set up an English colony on the Black Sea

50 King of the world

Philip Mansel on how Louis XIV turned France into a truly global power

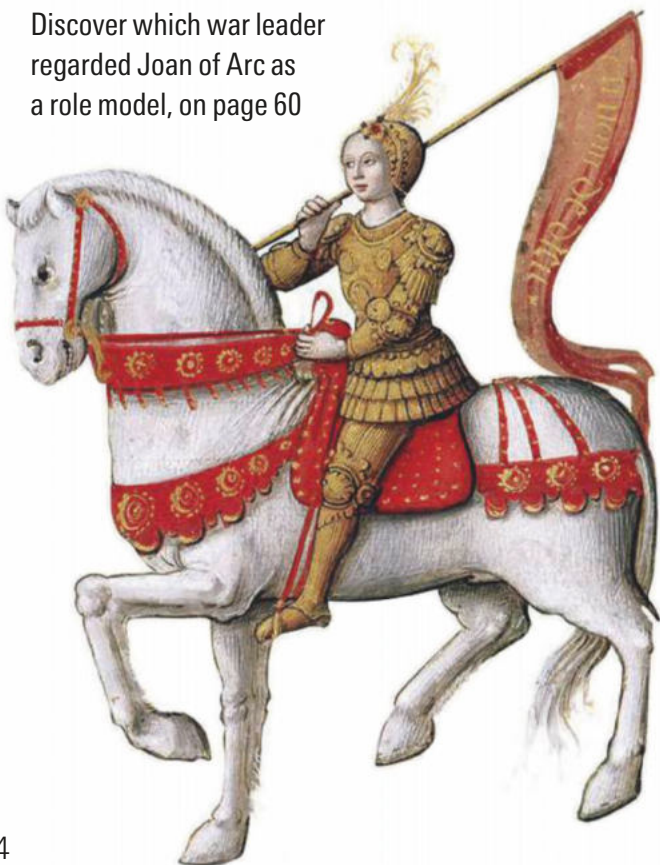
57 An unexpected Christmas

Sam Willis and James Daybell look at the festive period in a different light

60 Waging war with history

Andrew Roberts examines how war leaders from Napoleon to Churchill have tried to learn lessons of the past

Discover which war leader regarded Joan of Arc as a role model, on page 60

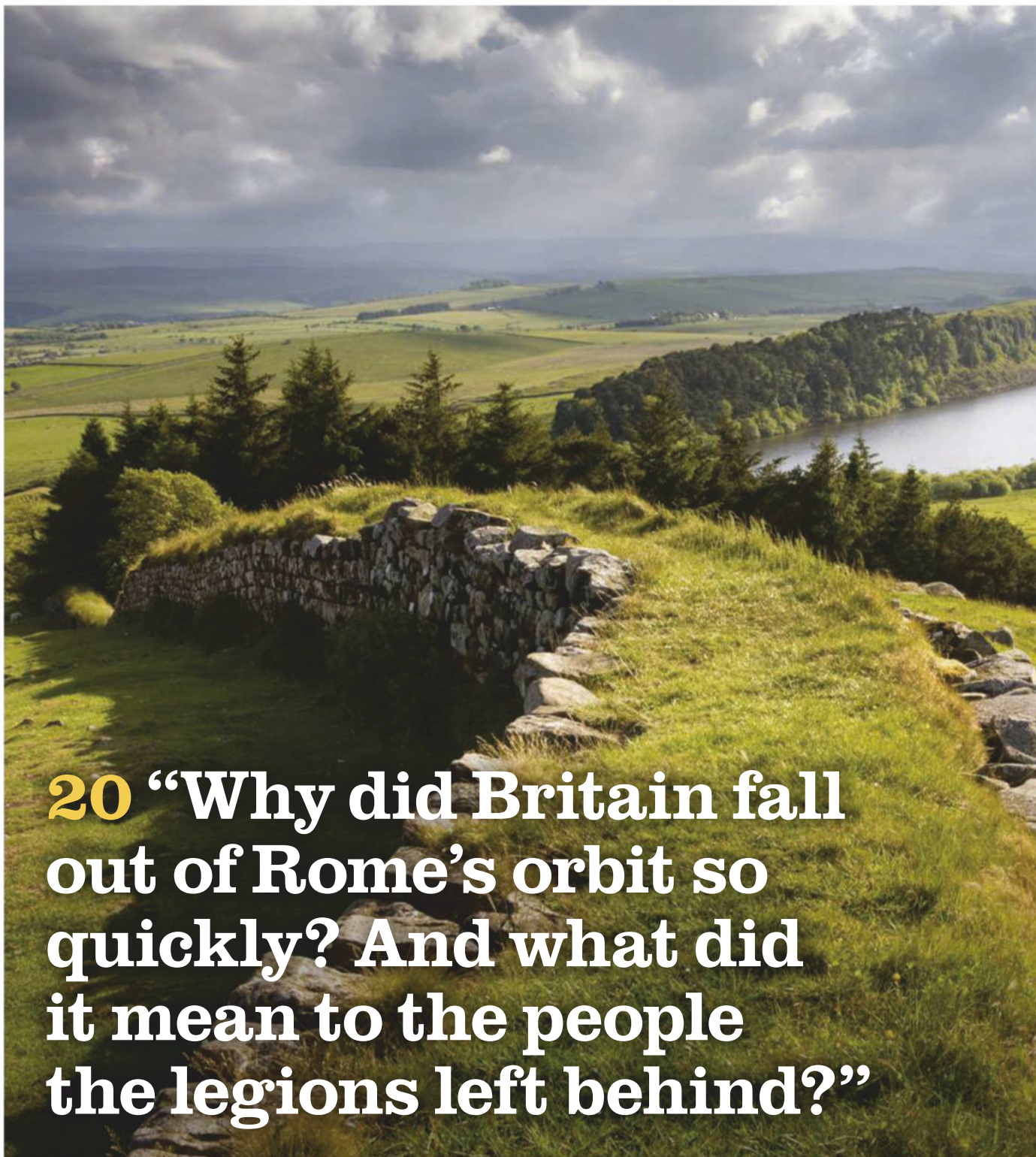


29 Why Albert Einstein fell in love with Britain in 1933



34 Was Eleanor of Aquitaine a medieval superwoman?

BRIDGEMAN/
HUGH COWLING/ALAMY



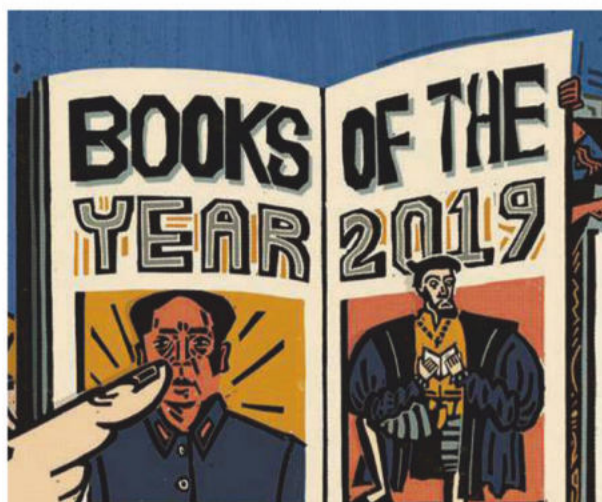
20 “Why did Britain fall out of Rome’s orbit so quickly? And what did it mean to the people the legions left behind?”

50 Why the Sun King saw himself as the new Alexander the Great



GETTY IMAGES/MARY EVANS/LAURIE AVON

57 From killer frogs to subversive snowmen, we serve up an alternative history of Christmas



66 Leading historians and authors nominate their favourite history books from the past 12 months



43 How a band of English exiles made their mark on the capital of the Byzantine empire

EVERY MONTH

This month in history

- 7 **History news**
- 10 **Behind the news:** wintertime general elections
- 13 **Michael Wood** on slavery
- 14 **Anniversaries**
- 17 **David Olusoga's Hidden Histories**

18 Letters

48 **Q&A** Your history questions answered

Books

66 **Books of the Year:** chosen by leading authors and historians

Encounters

76 **Diary:** What to see and do this month, including TV & radio, food, exhibitions and events. Plus, we review new drama *The King*

86 **Explore:** Knole country house

92 **Christmas Quiz**

94 **Prize crossword**

98 **My history hero**
Simon Reeve chooses Oskar Schindler

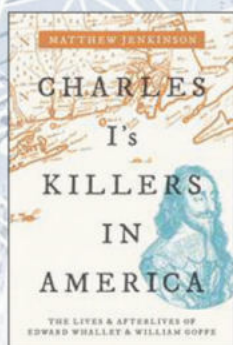
65 History Event
Medieval Life and Death

38 Subscribe

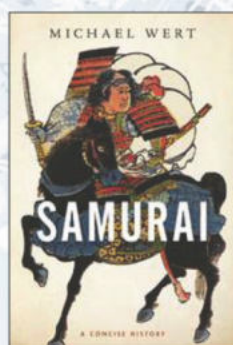
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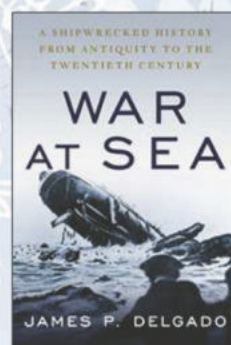
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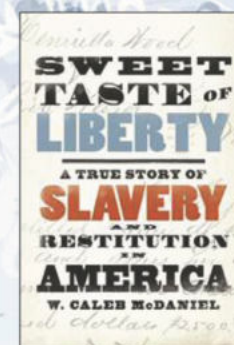
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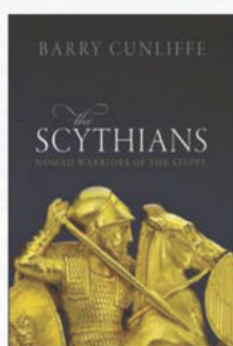


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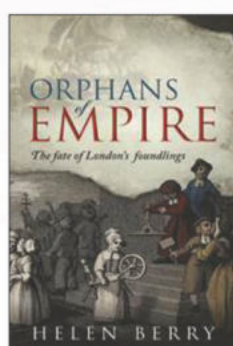


Sweet Taste of Liberty
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The Wall Street Journal

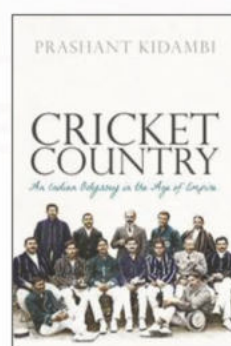
BOOKS OF THE YEAR



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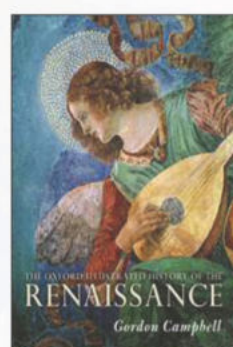


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EYE-OPENER

Precious metals

The largest-ever Bronze Age hoard discovered in London is to go on public display next year. Unearthed on a building site in Havering in 2018, the collection of 453 artefacts – including axe heads and fragments of swords – will be exhibited at the Museum of London Docklands from April. Due to the way in which the weapons were buried together in close groups, archaeologists believe the site was a metal workers' vault or an armoury 'recycling bank'.

TALKING POINTS

Reasons to be cheerful?



The publication of a new economic study claiming that the Victorian era was the “happiest” in history left many feeling baffled. **ANNA WHITELOCK** assesses the reaction on Twitter

Wherever we stand on the political debates that are currently consuming our national consciousness, we can all agree that historians of the future won't look back and conclude that we are living through halcyon days. Yet perhaps those living in Victorian Britain might have thought something similar.

Or perhaps they would have had a much brighter outlook. That's certainly the claim of a new study reported in *The Times* in October. The headline was stark: “Victorian times were happiest, study of the national mood finds.” Researchers from the universities of Warwick and Glasgow and the Alan Turing Institute tracked the nation's happiness by analysing the tone of the language used in millions of titles contained in the Google Books corpus. From this, they concluded that, despite the era being noted for its high rates of disease, child labour and inequality, Victorian spirits were generally high.

If Twitter is the database for future historical study, then scepticism might have been the prevailing mood of the month. **Martin Belam** (@MartinBelam) observed: “It's just a theory, but maybe – just maybe – an analysis of the tone of books and newspapers from the 1880s didn't actually capture the mood of all of society? I'm not sure how

many child labourers wrote novels?” As **Tessa Dunlop** (@Tessadunlop) added: “The ‘emotional tone’ used in books and newspapers in Victorian Britain? That was deference, NOT happiness.”

Other historians, such as **Hannah Greig** (@Hannah_Greig), saw the study slightly differently – mainly because of the opportunity it presented. “I know all the historians hated it... But I'd still like an excuse to come at it fresh and then take it to pieces with my students... Sometimes dodgy research makes for good seminar discussions.”

In response to queries she had received on Twitter, one of the study's authors, **Chanuki Seresinhe** (@thoughtssymmetry), sought to explain the methodology. “We didn't just presume it correlates with happiness. There is a robust econometrics analysis which shows that it does correlate with wellbeing taking as the ground truth the life satisfaction average per year and per country taken from the Eurobarometer survey.”

But overall, the consensus from historians was perhaps best summed up by **Guy Walters** (@guywalters), who simply retweeted the article with the comment “Hmmm.” **H**

Join the debate at
twitter.com/historyextra



Anna Whitelock is head of history at Royal Holloway, University of London

// I'm not sure how many child labourers wrote novels? //

Wigan 'pit brow lasses', employed to work above-ground at coal mines, pictured c1895



Evidence suggests women were part of a vibrant literary culture long before Julian of Norwich (above)

MEDIEVAL WOMEN

Women writers were overlooked

The birth of women's literary culture in England occurred several centuries earlier than traditionally believed, claims a University of Surrey academic.

A research project led by Professor Diane Watt has found that women's monasteries were responsible for producing important religious texts, letters and poetry as far back as the seventh century – around 700 years before the likes of literary pioneers such as Julian of Norwich, born in 1342.

As part of the project, supported by a grant from the Leverhulme Trust, Professor Watt studied rare sources held in libraries across Europe, including a copy of an eighth-century hagiography of St Gregory.

Although the text has previously been attributed to an anonymous monk from Whitby, Watt's research indicates that it was actually written by a community of nuns residing at the same 'double monastery', which catered for nuns and monks under the rule of an abbess.

According to Watt, one reason that early female writers have been overlooked is that many of their works were destroyed during Viking raids, which disproportionately affected women's religious houses. Her research also suggests that male writers deliberately “overwrote” texts originally produced by women.

The findings appear in Watt's new book, *Women, Writing and Religion in England and Beyond, 650–1100*, which is due to be published in December.

“Women's literary history in England is usually taken to start in the later Middle Ages,” Professor Watt told *BBC History Magazine*. “My research reveals that throughout the early Middle Ages, women composed and commissioned texts, and also played important roles as archivists and scribes. This has implications both for traditional literary history and feminist literary theory.” **H**

HISTORY IN THE NEWS

A selection of the stories hitting the **history headlines**



A GOOD MONTH FOR...

MEDIEVAL SCOTS

The face of a medieval man whose remains were among 60 skeletons found during work on Aberdeen Art Gallery in 2015 has been digitally recreated (above). Experts say that the individual, who died around 600 years ago, had extensive dental disease.

NAVAL HISTORIANS

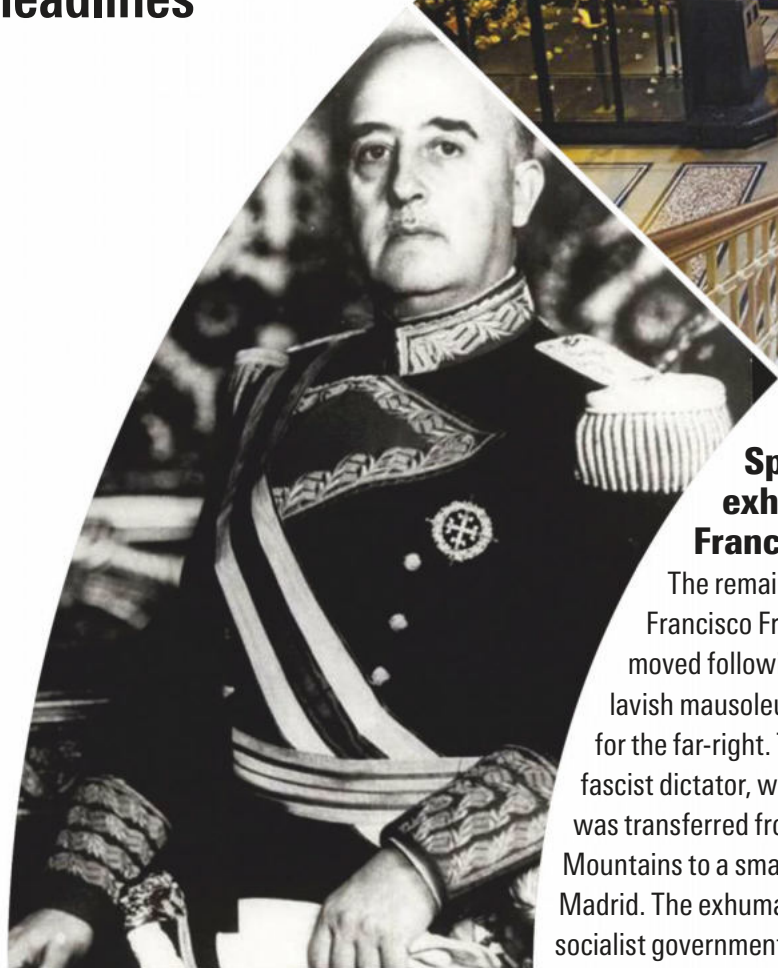
A hand-drawn map by Lord Nelson detailing his plans to defeat the Spanish and French navies at the battle of Trafalgar has been discovered inside an old scrapbook. The sketch, dated 5 September 1805, has been donated to the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth.

A BAD MONTH FOR...



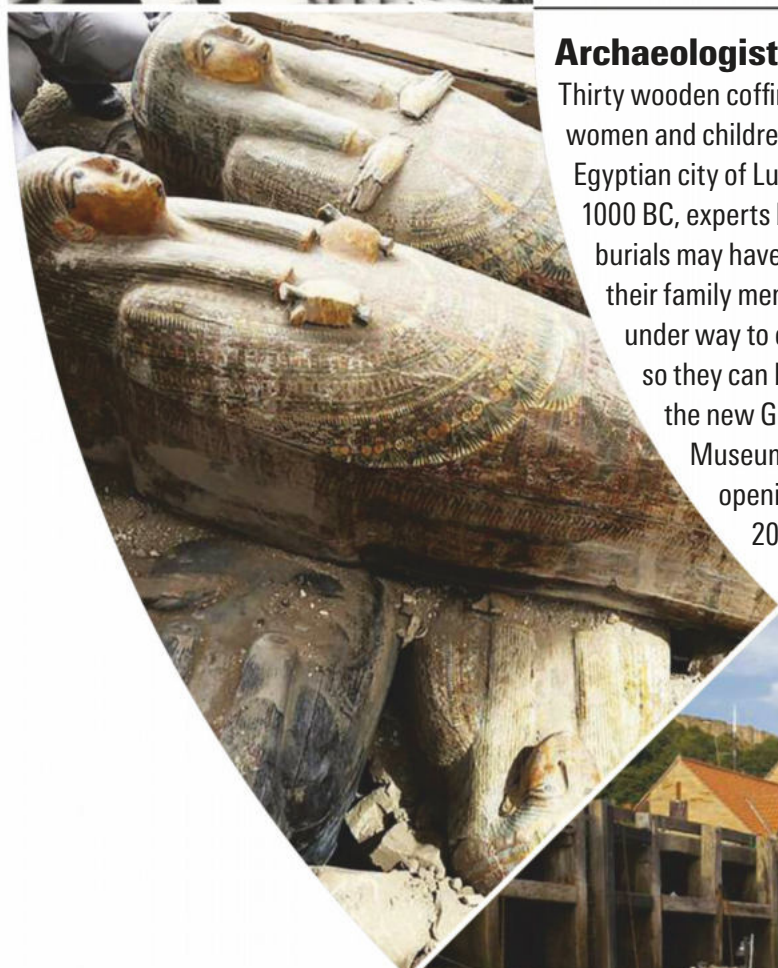
CHURCH DATING

A now-deleted tweet from the Church of England declaring that it had been welcoming people for "485 years" was met with bemusement online. The short message appeared to contradict the church's claims of continuity with the pre-Reformation era.



Spain exhumes Franco body

The remains of General Francisco Franco have been moved following concerns that his lavish mausoleum had become a shrine for the far-right. The embalmed body of the fascist dictator, who ruled Spain from 1939–75, was transferred from his tomb in the Guadarrama Mountains to a small municipal cemetery on the edge of Madrid. The exhumation had been a key policy pledge of Spain's socialist government, despite protests from Francoist sympathisers.

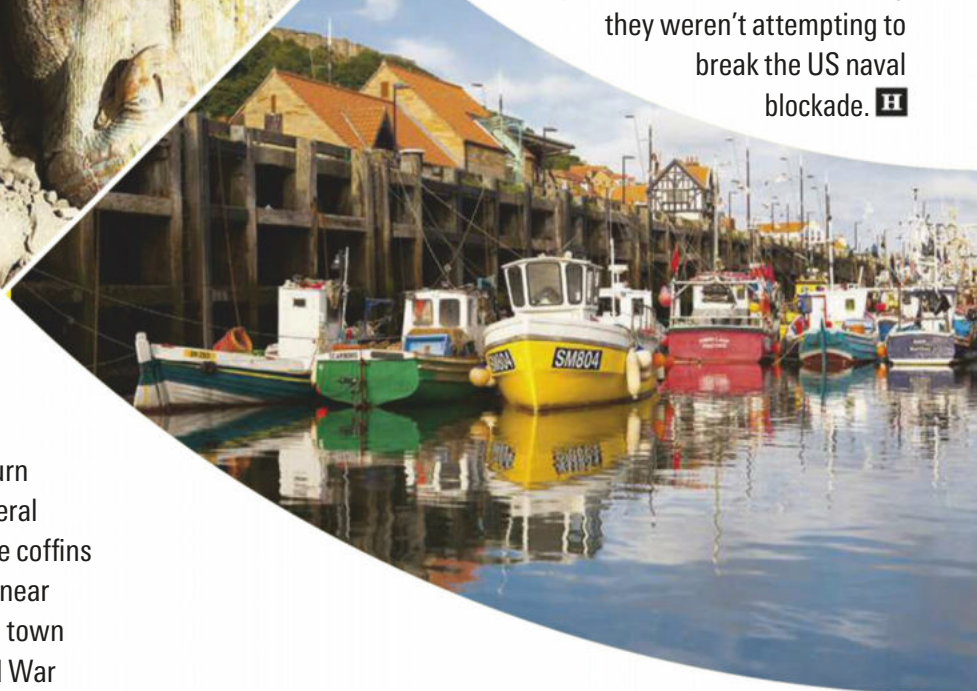


Archaeologists excavate ancient coffin haul

Thirty wooden coffins carrying the mummified remains of men, women and children have been unearthed near the Egyptian city of Luxor. Thought to date from around 1000 BC, experts believe that the well-preserved burials may have belonged to high priests and their family members. Work is now under way to conserve the coffins so they can be exhibited at the new Grand Egyptian Museum in Giza, opening in 2020.

UK played role in Cuba crisis

A GCHQ base in Scarborough played a pivotal role in the Cuban missile crisis, it has been revealed. According to a newly declassified paper, intelligence staff in the Yorkshire town intercepted messages from Soviet ships transporting nuclear weapons to Cuba in 1962, showing they weren't attempting to break the US naval blockade. **H**



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:

Manchester Museum, which is to return Aboriginal artefacts to Australia; General Francisco Franco, pictured in 1975; the coffins being excavated from their burial site near Luxor; the harbour in Scarborough – a town that played an unlikely role in the Cold War

A new political climate?

Received political wisdom says it may be unwise to go to the country in the shortest and coldest days of the year, as prime minister Boris Johnson has decided to do. Nevertheless, as **RICHARD TOYE** outlines, the United Kingdom has a long tradition of winter elections

The United Kingdom is heading for its third general election since 2015. Given that the executive and parliament are in a state of deadlock, this is no great surprise, but the exact timing has caused comment. Voting will take place on 12 December, and it may be difficult to obtain a high turnout during the festive season. There might also be other knock-on effects. “December election could bring down curtain on nativity plays,” warned *The Times* when the date was under discussion, as schools and church halls may be needed as polling stations.

Historically, though, winter elections, which we define here as those held between November and February, are not particularly unusual, even if every election over the last four decades has been held in April, May or June. In 1906, for example, in a pre-1918 era when polling was stretched out over days or weeks, voting began on 12 January and concluded on 8 February.

In the 19th century, winter elections were quite common, although the most popular month was August. After the Third Reform Act of 1884 extended the franchise dramatically, elections in that month tended to benefit the Conservatives, as many working-class town-dwellers were in the countryside helping with the harvest and thus unable to vote.

By contrast, of the 31 elections that have taken place since 1900, none has taken place in either August or September, although there is no rule that prevents it. During the 20th and 21st centuries, May and October have been the most popular months, scoring six elections each. June is a close second with five, but there have been four polls in February, and November and December have had two each.

So what factors determine when elections take place? Prior to the 2011 Fixed-term Parliaments Act (FTPA) the decision to call an election rested mainly with the prime minister, exercising a so-called ‘prerogative’ power on behalf of the crown. Where possible, of course, he or she would weigh the date carefully, taking particular account of the likely state of the economy at the point that voters would make up their minds.

But where events turned against

// Sometimes, politicians chose to go to the polls in the winter because they believed the national needs required it //



Standing in line Turnout was 72 per cent in the 2016 referendum, but will it be as high in the December 2019 general election?

leaders, they did not always have that luxury. At the end of 1905, Arthur Balfour resigned as prime minister, calculating that the opposition would not be able to form a government, and that he would return to office, triumphant and strengthened. But the Liberals confounded him, and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the new prime minister, quickly called an election for the new year. Balfour’s Conservatives were soundly defeated. Two further winter elections took place respectively at the start and finish of 1910. The Liberals, led by HH Asquith from 1908, were locked in a battle with the Conservative-dominated House of Lords, and it was the workings-out of that crisis that determined the need for chilly season voting.

Seeking a mandate for change

Sometimes prime ministers chose to go to the polls before they were obliged to do so because they believed that national needs required it. In 1923, Stanley Baldwin called a snap election for December because he was convinced that unemployment could only be cured by a system of



Early day voter

In December 1923, one Mrs Mawbey is the first to cast her vote in Dulwich, south London. The election was called by Stanley Baldwin to secure a new mandate, but instead the Conservative prime minister lost his majority

protective tariffs, and that he required a new mandate from the people in order to introduce such a system. He lost his majority. Another Conservative premier, Ted Heath, wanted the electorate to give him fresh authority in his government's battle with the miners. He too went to the country early, in February 1974. The outcome turned out to be as unpredictable as the British climate: widely considered the favourite, Heath was narrowly defeated by Labour's Harold Wilson.

Wilson's successor, Jim Callaghan, declined to call a potentially advantageous election in the autumn of 1978, and struggled on through the industrial unrest that became known as the winter of discontent. In the spring of 1979, his government was narrowly defeated in a vote of confidence in the House of Commons, triggering an election that took place in May.

Subsequent governments established a pattern of early summer polling, and this became formalised by the FTPA. However, as we have seen in 2017 and 2019, the requirement can be overthrown if circumstances seem to demand it and if the necessary number of MPs agree.

When winter elections were regarded as politically necessary they were not especially controversial, however hard-fought the issues might be. Yet they sometimes provoked a degree of concern, as when, during the first of two general elections in 1910, *The Lancet* published an editorial on "The Medical Aspect of a Winter Election".

The article expressed anxiety not for the voters but rather for the candidates and their active supporters, who were all said to lead "a life of dangerous stress" during elections. "To the mental and laryngeal strain which they have to undergo must be added the unaccustomed expo-

sure to which they are submitted, particularly in rural constituencies." Moreover: "Long evenings spent in chilly motor-car rides from place to place are interspersed with speech-making in the stuffy atmosphere of village schools, a constant alteration between the extremes of heat and cold which cannot fail to try the strongest."

Because of geography and divergent weather conditions, such difficulties were not felt equally across the country. In 1931, when the election took place at the end of October, the *Dundee Courier* judged that the Western Isles constituency was "probably the world's worst for a winter election". If the winter gales were blowing, "then the candidate is pretty well anchored, for all round the coast there is little protection, and there are swift-running tides that even without a gale give anxious moments to a landlubber". This would give the advantage to an incumbent MP, as a less-well-known challenger would have little opportunity to meet the voters in person.

Today, technology can mitigate some of the more serious problems posed by a winter election – but, between them, meteorology and psephology offer no exact predictions as to the result. Although folk wisdom suggests that good weather generates high turnout and therefore benefits Labour, the case is, at best, unproven. "The sun is out, and so are the Tories," said a buoyant Neil Kinnock on election day in April 1992, but on the night it was John Major who was returned to Downing Street. This year, it remains to be seen who the weather will deliver an early Christmas present to. **H**



Richard Toye is head of history at the University of Exeter.

His books include *The Roar of the Lion: The Untold Story of Churchill's World War II Speeches* (OUP, 2013)



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MICHAEL WOOD ON...
THE SLAVE TRADE

// Why Britons *need* a monument to the victims of the slave trade //

“You can’t hug your way through history,” said historian David Cannadine recently. We read history for entertainment and enjoyment as well as

illumination, but it is not a comfort blanket. Sometimes its lessons are stark and unavoidable. That came to mind earlier this year when the historian Lonnie Bunch became the first African-American to head the Smithsonian in Washington. Founder director of the wonderful and shattering National Museum of African American History and Culture, Bunch spoke of “not what people want to remember, but what they need to remember”.

In the States, slavery is at the centre of the national narrative – America’s ‘original sin’, as it’s been called. For Britons, it has proved more easy to ignore slavery because it didn’t happen on our soil, but across the ocean, out of sight. But it helped make our wealth – as Fons Americanus, Kara Walker’s astonishing installation on slavery in the Tate Modern, reminds us.

Last month, Olivette Otele was appointed professor of the history of slavery at Bristol, the most crucial place in Britain’s story of slavery (incredibly, Otele is the first black woman to have become a history professor at a British university). This marks a turning point in British education. At stake, as Otele put it, is how Britain “examines, acknowledges and teaches the history of enslavement”, which she feels will help make “a stronger and fairer society”. These are great issues – and a moral imperative – as the mistreatment of the Windrush generation has shown us.

The African slave trade was the biggest forced migration in history, consisting of 12 or 13 million people, not

including those who died while being transported to the Americas. A third were on British ships – a massive fact in the history of this country. Facing up to it, and commemorating it, has taken a long time. Liverpool was the pioneer: the slavery museum there started as part of the Maritime Museum in 1980. Then a slavery gallery was created in 1994, which explored Liverpool’s role in the trade. By the early 2000s, the growing interest and high volume of visitors led to the decision to create a museum specially dedicated to the history of slavery and its legacy.

The new museum (which I strongly urge readers to visit) opened on 23 August 2007, the date of the International Day for Remembrance of the Slave Trade (chosen because it marked the beginning of the 1791 Haitian slave uprising). That year was also the bicentenary of the Slave Trade Act, which abolished the slave trade – though not slavery itself – inside the British empire.

That same year, the long-mooted idea of a British monument to the victims of slavery was formalised. Since then, the organisation Memorial 2007 has campaigned tirelessly, but the government has failed to support it, though they have backed memorials for the First World War, the Holocaust, and Srebrenica. You can see the monument – entitled ‘Remembering Enslaved Africans and Their Descendants’, and designed by the sculptor Les Johnson – on the website memorial2007.org.uk/the-sculpture. The memorial secured planning permission for a space in the Rose Garden in Hyde Park, but so far less than £100,000 of the £4m that is needed to fund the project has been raised. If that cannot be found soon, the planning permission will expire, and the site will be lost.

In his great speech three years ago at the opening of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, President Obama cited the historian John Hope Franklin, (one of the driving forces behind the museum): “Good history is a good foundation for a better present and future.” Obama continued: “The best history helps us recognise the mistakes that we’ve made and the dark corners of the human spirit that we need to guard against. And, yes, a clear-eyed view of history can make us uncomfortable, and shake us out of familiar narratives.”

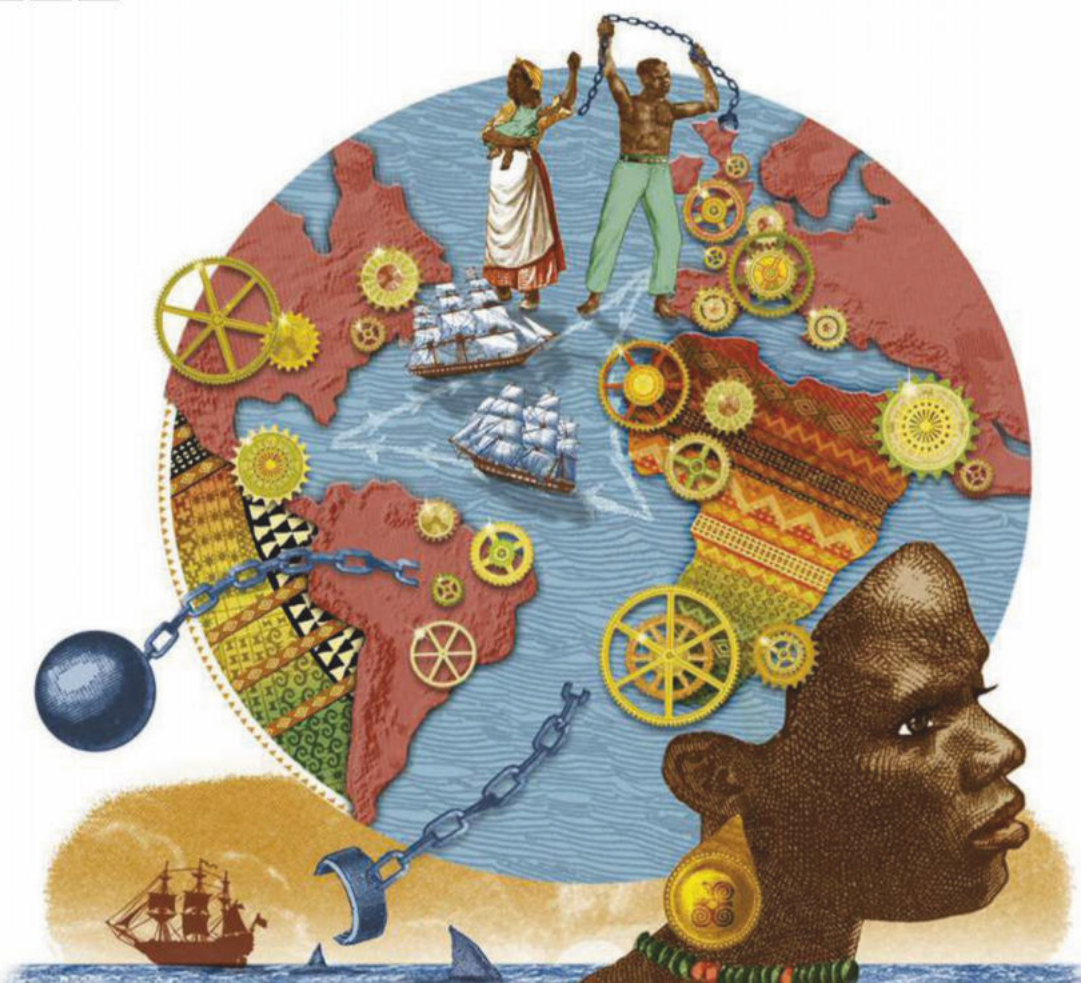
How compelling to hear a politician speak so urgently of the power of history. And let’s not think these issues are dead. Across the world, forms of slavery still entrap hundreds of millions. Empire and slavery made each and every one of us in the UK, whatever our origin. The legacy of the Atlantic slave trade is still with us – especially Britons of African descent – psychologically, culturally and materially.

A monument in Hyde Park would be a reminder, as Lonnie Bunch said, not of the history we want to remember but the one we need to remember. **H**

ILLUSTRATION BY FEMKE DE JONG

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Michael Wood is professor of public history at the University of Manchester. He has presented numerous BBC series, and his books include *The Story of England* (Viking, 2010)

BBC



ANNIVERSARIES

DOMINIC SANDBROOK highlights events that took place at Christmas in history

25 DECEMBER 820

A Byzantine leader is butchered

Assassins knife Leo V to death during morning prayers

It was dawn on 25 December 820 when the Byzantine emperor Leo V made his way into the imperial palace church for morning prayers. An experienced former general who had ruled in Constantinople for the last seven years, Leo prided himself on his singing voice, and at the first hymn's refrain – “They poured contempt on the yearning of the king of all kings” – he raised his voice with gusto.

Unfortunately, Leo did not realise that this was the signal for a group of plotters, allied with his imprisoned rival Michael the Armorian, to make their move. Drawing their knives, the conspirators rushed towards the emperor – but in the gloom, and confused by the worshippers' heavy cloaks and felt hats, they had mistaken their man, and they fell upon one of Leo's officials instead.

Realising what was going on, Emperor Leo seized a large golden cross to defend himself, and battle was joined in earnest. “He was able to resist for some time by parrying the sword-thrusts with the divine cross,” wrote the historian John Skylitzes, “but then he was set upon from all sides, like a wild beast. He was already beginning to flag from his wounds when, at the end, he saw a gigantic person about to deal him a blow.”

At that, Leo began to mutter a prayer, but the blow fell anyway, severing his arm and smashing the cross in two. Then, wrote Skylitzes, “someone also cut off his head, which was already damaged by wounds and hanging down”. And that was that.



A gold coin showing Leo V holding a cross – but his faith was not able to prevent his assassination



27 DECEMBER 537

In Constantinople, Justinian I attends the grand inauguration of the magnificent new Church of the Holy Wisdom, **Hagia Sophia**, built by more than 10,000 people over the previous five years.

**24 DECEMBER 1979**

The Soviets invade Afghanistan

Act of aggression shatters hopes of USSR-US detente

Christmas Day 1979, and President Jimmy Carter was at Camp David with his family. It was, he noted in his diary, a “relatively lonely” day, the highlight being his daughter Amy’s excitement at her presents, which she had insisted on opening at 5.30am. In the evening, they watched the film *The Black Stallion* then, quietly, they went to bed.

Just a few hours later Carter learned that during the night of Christmas Eve, even before Amy had opened her gifts, huge Soviet planes had landed at Kabul airport, airlifting some 8,000 Red Army troops into the capital of the landlocked country. On the Amu Darya river that marked the Soviet Union’s southern border, pontoon bridges were creaking beneath the weight of the 108th Motorized Rifle Division, heading south towards Kabul. It was, Carter wrote later, an act of “direct aggression by the Soviet armed forces against a freedom-loving people”, and a major step towards the Kremlin’s goal of world domination.

Actually, the Christmas invasion was a bit more complicated than that. Afghanistan had been a Soviet client for years, while the Kabul regime had been pestering Moscow for months to send troops to help them crush tribal rebels. For a long time the Kremlin hesitated. At last, convinced that their puppet president, Hafizullah Amin, had completely lost control, they had decided to act. They would indeed send troops – but Amin himself had to go.

Two days after Christmas, KGB commandos stormed the Tajbeg palace and killed Amin. On 28 December, Radio Kabul announced that the ruling Revolutionary Council had issued an invitation to the Soviet Union for further military assistance, and that the Kremlin had accepted.

But far from restoring order, as the Soviet leadership hoped, the invasion provoked even fiercer tribal resistance. It also shattered any lingering hopes of detente with the Americans. As Jimmy Carter wrote in his diary, he was “determined to make [the Russians] pay for their unwarranted aggression”. After all, they had almost ruined his Christmas. **H**



GETTY IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN/SHUTTERSTOCK

Rebel fighters inspect a captured Soviet armoured personnel carrier near Asmar in Afghanistan, on 27 December 1979



Thank you, Sylvia

Sylvia left a gift in her Will to help conquer Stroke

The first we knew of Sylvia was when we received notification of the gift she'd left us in her Will. Shortly after, a beautiful story of a much-loved woman began to unfurl.

Friends remembered Sylvia's kind-heart and her wish to help others. She spent part of her adult-life caring for her mother, and developed a passion

for medicine. Becoming a medical secretary was her next step and, in the course of her career, she discovered the devastating impact a stroke could have on people and their families. She saw that research and treatment were vastly under-funded, and she decided to remember the Stroke Association in her Will.

Sylvia's gift has helped fund our work to conquer stroke. She's supported research to prevent and treat stroke, and she's helped care for survivors. And that's something you can do too – in the same way.

If you would like to learn more about remembering the Stroke Association in your Will, please get in touch.

**Call 020 75661505 email legacy@stroke.org.uk
or visit stroke.org.uk/legacy**

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HIDDEN HISTORIES

DAVID OLUSOGA explores lesser-known stories from our past

// It's behind you! The Christmas panto has Renaissance roots //

The traditional British Christmas is not as British or as traditional as we often imagine. The Christmas tree is a relatively recent innovation: a German import, popularised in Britain during the 1840s by Prince Albert. The Christmas card is another Victorian invention, and turkey only caught on in the 20th century. Before that, goose was the traditional Christmas dish.

Another foreign import is pantomime. Its origins lie in the *commedia dell'arte*, the 'comedy of the artists', performed in Renaissance Italy by travelling street entertainers. The players wore masks and told tales through improvised sketches, slapstick comedy, singing and dancing. Their shows revolved around a number of stock characters: disreputable old men, young lovers, harlequins and clowns. The troupes of the *commedia dell'arte* travelled across Italy, from city to city, as well as to France and occasionally Elizabethan England, where they may well have influenced Shakespeare.

The 'father' of British pantomime was John Rich. As a young actor and theatre manager in the early 1700s, he saw the potential of adapting the *commedia dell'arte* for the English stage. Rich took the figure of the Harlequin and made him the central character in what was to become pantomime. Rich presented the first pantomime, soon to be known as a 'harlequinade', to audiences at Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre in 1717. He himself played the role of the Harlequin, but partly because he didn't have a

good stage voice, Rich's Harlequin told his stories through mime, acrobatics and stage trickery. His shows were so successful that they spawned a craze, and other theatre managers began to copy the formula.

At this stage, harlequinades were just short routines performed during the intervals or at the end of longer, more serious plays. Yet as John Rich's productions became increasingly spectacular, they drew ever larger audiences and made him greater profits. But they also drew criticism. Opposition came from those who worried that this light foreign import posed a threat to proper theatre.

One critic was the actor David Garrick, who also managed the Theatre Royal on Drury Lane and was a business rival of John Rich. Although Garrick was dismissive of pantomime, he was well aware of its popularity, and was eager to ensure he did not miss out on the money that was to be made. "If they won't come to *Lear* and *Hamlet*, I must give them Harlequin," he once said.

Garrick found a way of having his cake and eating it. To keep theatregoers happy, he staged his own pantomimes, hiring a famous mime artist to play the Harlequin. But Garrick protected his reputation as the defender of serious theatre by only putting on pantomime at Christmas. In doing so, he established a link between pantomime and Christmas that has remained intact ever since.

The next stage in the evolution of the British pantomime came in 1800, when the performer Joseph Grimaldi took another of the stock characters from the *commedia dell'arte*, Pierrot the Clown, and adapted him for British audiences. Grimaldi's clown had a painted face, with

white cheeks and bright red lips. He was anarchic, disrespectful and irreverent, poking fun at everyone and everything. Grimaldi also gave his clown one of the classic features of British panto – a catchphrase: "Here we are again." Grimaldi's clown became an enormously popular character on the stage of Regency London, and set the template for the modern clown.

The *commedia dell'arte*'s transformation into the British panto was finally completed in the late Victorian era, when the music-hall star Dan Leno developed a new character: the Dame. **H**

Send in the clowns

Mariano Alonso Pérez's later depiction of a harlequinade, a comic theatrical genre inspired by anarchic Italian travelling shows



David Olusoga is professor of public history at the University of Manchester, and the presenter of several BBC documentaries





Jane Taylor found fame for 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star', but where and when did she write the poem?

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Fleeing William

I really enjoyed Marc Morris's article on William I's Harrying of the North (November). The 950th anniversary of this event certainly hasn't been forgotten here in Bedlingtonshire (an enclave of Durham land within the bounds of Northumberland until the 1850s). The monks of Durham were so worried that William's forces would destroy their relics in retribution for the massacre of his forces in Durham and York that they fled back to Lindisfarne in the winter of 1069.

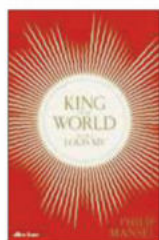
On the night of 12 December 1069, they rested in the Church of St Mary the Virgin in Bedlington with a coffin bearing the remains of St Cuthbert and probably the head of St Oswald. The church was re-named Saint Cuthbert's as a result, something we have been marking with a series of events throughout this year.

Keep up the excellent work on your wonderful magazine, which I have subscribed to since issue one!

Brian Thompson, Bedlington



A wall painting of Saint Cuthbert, whose remains were preserved during the Norman Harrying of the North



We reward the *Letter of the Month* writer with a copy of a new history book. This issue, that is **King of the World** by Philip Mansel. Simon Sebag Montefiore tells us why it's one of his books of the year on page 73

Luminous verse

Your assertion in the Lavenham article in the November issue (*Explorer*) that Jane Taylor wrote 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star' in Lavenham surely cannot be correct.

The Taylor family moved to Lavenham when Jane was three and then to Colchester in 1796 when she was 12 or 13. As the poem was published in 1806, it seems highly unlikely that she would have held on to what was obviously a well-written piece for 10 years before publishing it.

The Taylor house is in West Stockwell Street in Colchester. A plaque on the wall commemorates the sisters' connection and, while not open to the public, it does attract lots of sightseers, especially young children.

Peter Jones, Colchester

Editor replies: It appears we may have been too confident in declaring that 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star' was written in Lavenham. Jane Taylor was indeed residing in Colchester in 1806, the year the poem was published, so this seems the most likely candidate. However, it is possible that she had composed it sometime before – potentially in Lavenham, where she returned for a spell in 1803. We would be very interested to hear from anyone who can shed further light on the creation of the poem.

Contemptible suggestion

So, 'Anglo-Saxon', a term that has been in use for more than 1,000 years is suddenly seen as racist and divisive (*Comment*, December)? How ridiculous. The actions of racists and neo-fascists in the USA should not impact on the interpretation of our own history.

The suggestion to re-name the period as 'Early English' is also contemptible and infantile. Will the history of the Romans, not noted for any particular sensitivity to different racial or ethnic groups now be known as Early Eastern Mediterranean?

This is political correctness gone mad.
Ian Kirk, Suffolk

Tension close to the surface

Having read Kate Loveman's excellent article on the era of Charles II (*Putting the Realm Back Together*, November), I wonder are we not always on the fringes of some civil war? Think of any period in history and some major discord in society is never far away – the Troubles, race riots in the 1970s and 1980s, the Poll Tax riots, today's Extinction Rebellion protests and bitter divisions over Brexit to name a few recent



examples. So far, all-out civil war involving every faction of British society hasn't occurred, but is the possibility of it taking place really so unlikely?

Stefan Badham, Hampshire

Multiracial crews

I was intrigued by the black faces in the painting for 'The navy bring down Blackbeard' article in the *Anniversaries* section (November). I referred colleagues to the article, and historian Miranda Kaufmann pointed me to Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker's book, *The Many-Headed Hydra* (2000). This notes that, "the pirate ship was motley – multinational, multicultural, multiracial... In 1718, 60 out of Blackbeard's crew of 100 were black."

Piracy was quite common on the Atlantic. The black pirates were probably mainly runaway slaves from the plantations and were apparently well received by the majority of the crews, who were mainly seamen who had deserted their Royal Navy or merchant vessels because of appalling conditions.

Marika Sherwood, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London



Jean Leon Gerome Ferris's depiction of the capture of Blackbeard depicts a multiracial skirmish



In 1981, rioting engulfed Toxteth, Liverpool. Surveying Britain's history of unrest, reader Stefan Badham offers the disquieting idea that we might be "always on the fringes of some civil war"

Debunking national myths

I found David Reynolds' article about Britain and Brexit of great interest (*Why Britain Punched Above its Weight*, December). I have one comment: Britain's "greatness" in the Victorian era was more perceived than real, both militarily and commercially.

Britain had a small army compared with most great powers, and it was thinly spread around the colonies. Britain's Victorian industries were largely undercapitalised, with few firms bothering to invest in the future. Andrew Carnegie said as much in an interview with *The Times* in 1890. Employers based their business on low pay and poor conditions— what we would now call 'sweated labour'.

The Victorian mindset was low tax, low investment, low pay. The whole represents an illusion of greatness. When the First World War came, Britain had neither the resources nor capacity to cope with it, instead spending gold reserves to pay for American and Canadian products.

Britain's power was in decline throughout the 20th century and up to today. Unless and until Britain invests properly in its future and its people, that decline – and the disaffection that led to Brexit – will continue.

Keith Longmore, Ashwellthorpe

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AFTER THE EMPIRE

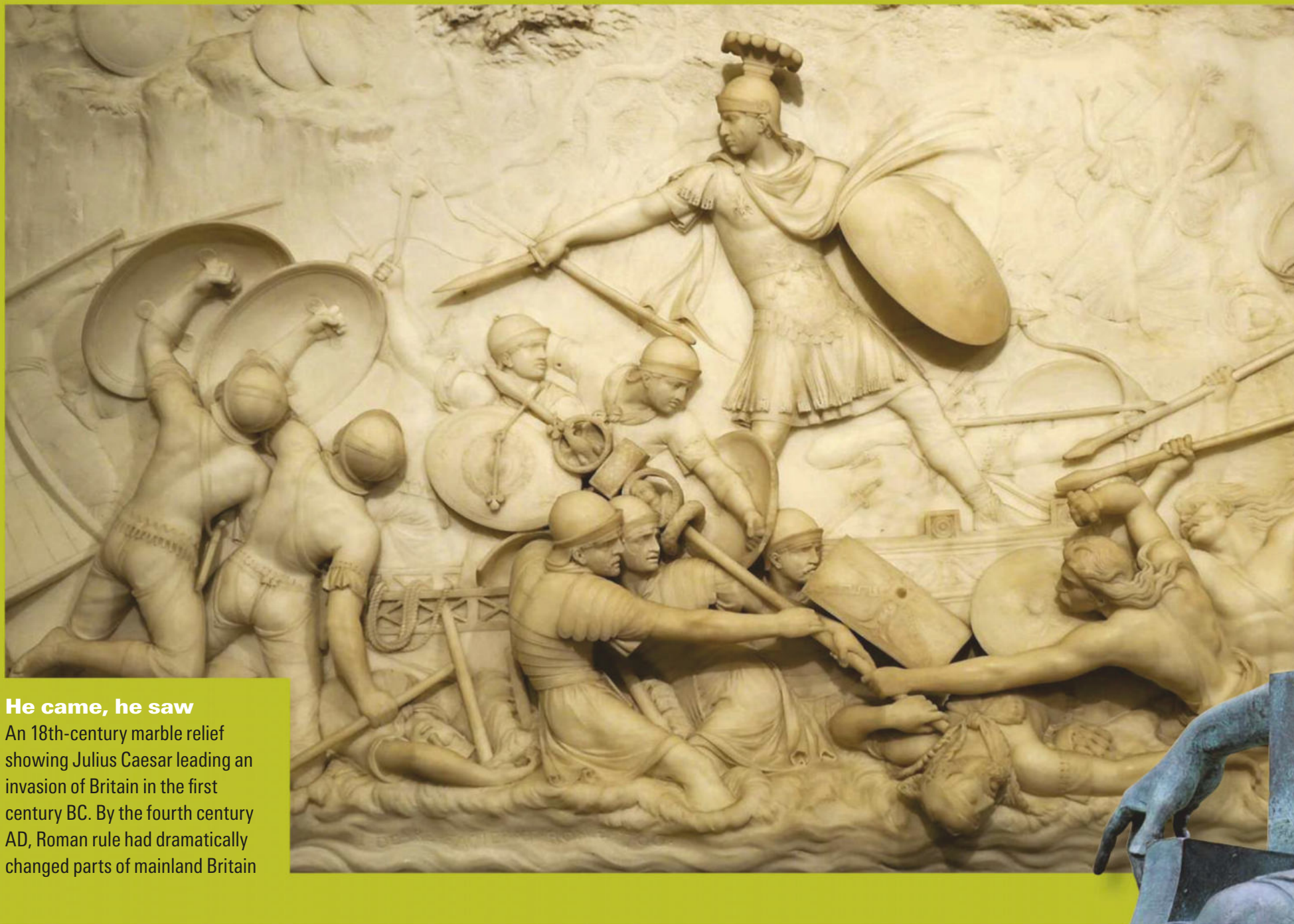
The end of Roman Britain in AD 409 is one of *the* landmark moments in British history. But for those who lived in the province, did it spell a mere bump in the road – or a disastrous descent into chaos?

Will Bowden investigates



The mighty fall

A statue of the Roman emperor Augustus in Augsburg, Germany. For centuries, Rome controlled swathes of north-west Europe, including Britain. But, by the dawn of the fifth century, the empire was in retreat



He came, he saw

An 18th-century marble relief showing Julius Caesar leading an invasion of Britain in the first century BC. By the fourth century AD, Roman rule had dramatically changed parts of mainland Britain

It was the same rainy island off the north-west corner of continental Europe. But in many ways it was utterly different. In the fourth century AD, visitors to Britain from as far afield as north Africa could have reasonably expected to be able to converse with the locals in a common language, and spend the coins they had in their pockets. By the early fifth century, however, Roman life was apparently over. Towns had vanished, not to be revived for several centuries, while the everyday use of coins was abandoned, and dress, diets and buildings changed beyond all recognition.

What caused Britain to fall out of the orbit of the empire and lose the trappings of the Roman world so quickly? And what were the effects of these changes on the people of Britain? For the sixth-century British writer Gildas, the end of Roman Britain was sudden, dramatic and apocalyptic. He recounts the Britons pleading for help from the Roman commander in Gaul. “The barbarians drive us to the sea, the sea drives us to the barbarians,” they apparently wailed. “Between these two means of death, we are either killed or drowned.”

The traditional story of this period, based

on fragmentary literary sources like Gildas, describes a province rocked by frequent political and military disturbance from the third century onwards. Trouble-makers and would-be usurpers of the imperial throne triggered unrest from as early as the 260s. St Jerome, writing around AD 415, famously notes that Britain was “a land fertile in tyrants”, most of whom rose from the ranks of the army stationed within the country.

The actions of such ‘tyrants’ certainly played a part in depleting the British garrison, which towards the end of the fourth century numbered between 12,000 and 30,000 men. In AD 367, a rebellion of the troops on Hadrian’s Wall was accompanied by raids from Scotland and Ireland, and from across the North Sea, in the so-called ‘barbarian conspiracy’. Later, in 383, Magnus Maximus, a commander in Britain, was proclaimed emperor by his troops and reportedly took most of them to Gaul to fight the unpopular reigning emperor. It is unlikely that these soldiers ever returned.

Matters, it appears, took a turn for the worse on New Year’s Eve 405, when large numbers of barbarians crossed the frozen Rhine into the empire. This seems to have precipitated a crisis in Britain, where

For the sixth-century British writer Gildas, the end of Roman Britain was sudden, dramatic and apocalyptic

three would-be emperors were proclaimed in rapid succession, in opposition to Honorius, the incumbent western emperor. The first two, Marcus and Gratian, did not last long enough to trouble the coin minters, but Constantine III survived to take the remaining troops with him to Gaul in 407 to combat the incursion and consolidate his power.

The pagan writer Zosimus tells us that in 409 the pressure of barbarian invaders obliged the British “to throw off Roman rule and live independently, no longer subject to Roman laws”. There has been considerable dispute about what he meant by this but,

King in the north

Constantine I was proclaimed emperor at Eboracum (York) in AD 306. He used this proclamation as a springboard to becoming sole ruler of the entire empire



Line of duty

In AD 367, a rebellion of troops on Hadrian's Wall was accompanied by raids from Scotland, Ireland and across the North Sea

all the same, 409 is now generally regarded as the end of Roman rule in Britain. (Until recently, of course, most school history books had given the landmark date as 410, when the emperor Honorius famously told Britain to “look to its own defences”. But this is now normally seen as the result of a mistake by Zosimus, who was probably referring to *Bruttium* in southern Italy.)

An empire in retreat

Whatever the true date of the fall of Roman Britain, the idea that ‘the Romans left’ is now hardwired into the public consciousness. It’s regarded as a landmark moment in British history. But what did this ‘leaving’ mean? After all, it’s worth remembering that the soldiers who quit Britain to fight elsewhere comprised a mere fraction of the overall population. Those they left behind (numbering around 3–4 million people) had been part of the Roman world for 350 years, and would have felt every bit as ‘Roman’ as the soldiers setting sail for the continent.

The idea of a sudden, dramatic break between the pre and post-Roman eras has perhaps been reinforced by the archaeological evidence, which paints a picture of towns vanishing and coins and pottery disapp-

earing. However, we need to apply a good level of caution to the evidence. First, we have to recognise that the things we think of as representative of ‘Roman Britain’ – such as mosaics and villas – were only present in significant quantities in about a third of mainland Britain, concentrated in the south and east.

Secondly, we are talking about the disappearance of a particular range of material, the importance of which may be overstated because of its archaeological visibility. Roman coins and pottery receive an enormous amount of attention because they constitute the main tools that Roman archaeologists use to date their sites. Their disappearance in the early fifth century is a significant problem for us, but it may have had less of an impact on people at the time.

The Roman empire minted coins primarily to pay the army and to provide a means by which people could pay tax.

Their use in a wider market economy was an accidental byproduct of this and, in Britain at least, was short-lived.

The supply of bronze coins to Britain slowed down after 395 and ceased altogether after 402 – as was the case across the western empire. There is some debate as to how long coins remained in circulation, but the fact that there was no real attempt to produce local coins to replace the Roman supply suggests that there was little demand.

The end of the manufacture of fine pottery appears, on the face of it, to have been equally dramatic. Major pottery industries in places such as the Nene Valley (Cambridgeshire) and Oxfordshire ceased production in the early fifth century, possibly as a result of a collapse of distribution systems. However, pottery drinking vessels may well have been quickly replaced by ones fashioned from metal, wood and leather. And the presence



Emperor Magnus Maximus, who took his troops from Britain to Gaul in 383. Most probably never returned

Most towns, including London, went into decline long before the end of Roman Britain

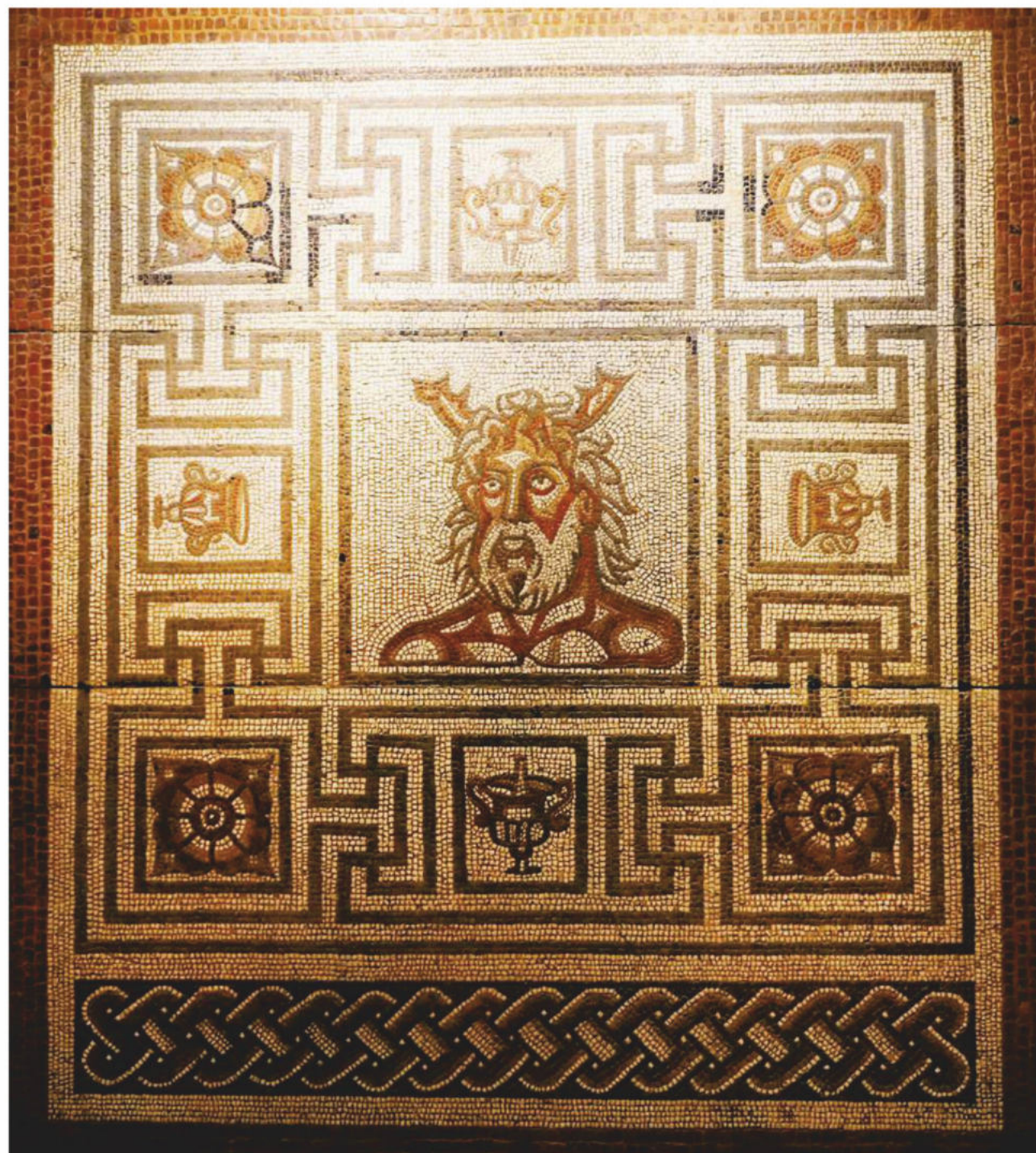
in the fourth century. The most impressive villas in Britain all belong to this later period, as do the most spectacular figurative mosaics. None of these villas outlasted the early years of the fifth century as grand houses, but there's evidence for continuing occupation at a number of them, suggested by the presence of cemeteries in and around some of the buildings.

Unearthed treasures

Britain's late Roman wealth is also demonstrated in the spectacular stockpiles of coins, plate and jewellery dating from the late fourth and early fifth centuries. In 1992, a Suffolk metal detectorist, searching for a farmer's lost hammer, found what turned out to be the Hoxne hoard. This incredible discovery comprised 15,234 gold, silver and bronze coins and around 200 other precious metal items; the 5.3kg of gold unearthed from the Sussex soil would have been enough to pay the annual tax bill of a major town. (The farmer's hammer, incidentally, was also recovered and now sits in the British Museum along with the hoard.)

But, as remarkable as it undoubtedly was, the Hoxne hoard was far from unique. In fact, Britain has yielded more caches of precious metal from AD 300–500 than the rest of the Roman empire combined. The question, of course, is why? Hoards often indicate periods of unrest, when people felt compelled to bury their wealth for safekeeping – and there was certainly no shortage of that in early fifth-century Britain. But the same could be said for the entire western empire. Perhaps this anomaly was the product of particular concentrations of wealth in Roman Britain, or maybe there was some unknown factor preventing Britons from recovering their buried possessions as the Roman administration disintegrated.

Some of these owners of grand villas and beautiful silver plate would have been Christians, adherents of a faith that had taken root in Britain by the fourth century, at least among the upper classes. Bishops from York, London and possibly Lincoln attended



A million little pieces A mosaic found in the town of Verulamium, west of the modern city of St Albans. The most impressive figurative mosaics in Roman Britain all belong to the last century of Roman rule

of walnut wood cups in the Sutton Hoo ship burial (dating to c620) suggests that pottery's demise may partially have been the result of a change in taste rather than economic decline.

If coinage and tableware disappeared rather suddenly, the same cannot be said for the towns of Roman Britain, which had already changed dramatically. These have been described as “a failed experiment”, one that was already largely over by AD 350. The end of Roman Britain may have hastened the collapse of urban life, but it only exacerbated a process that had begun decades before.

Towns were the means by which the Roman administration collected tax, but the social customs that shaped large population centres in the Mediterranean – where local grandees competed for status and public office through the construction of public

buildings – never really took off in Britain.

In most Roman towns in Britain – even the provincial capital, London – the forum (main building of administration) had fallen into disuse as early as the third century.

By the fourth century, a number of forums, such as the one at Silchester, had been put to an entirely different use: hosting small-scale industries.

However, we should be wary of judging these urban centres by the standards of what we believe Roman towns should have looked like. It's clear that many remained active centres into the later fourth century. These were often defended by grand wall circuits and boasted luxurious townhouses – examples of which have been excavated at Dorchester and St Albans.

Despite the picture of political turbulence described by the literary sources, it is clear that some residents of Roman Britain were thriving

The Empress pepper pot, found in the Hoxne hoard, dates from around AD 400



Life after Rome

How things changed with the end of Roman rule



Towns went into further decline

However, in most parts of Britain the enthusiasm for urban life that shaped the Mediterranean never seems to have taken root in the first place. In settlements such as Silchester (above), the forum was converted to house small-scale industries.

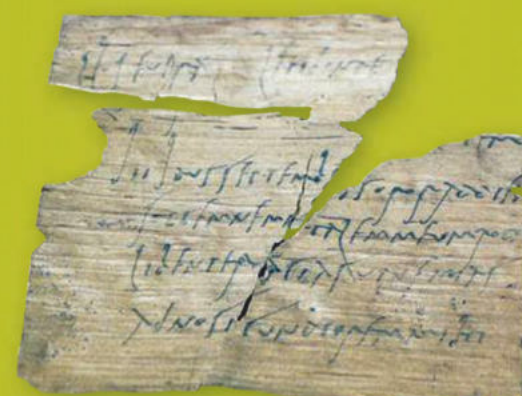


People ate less fish

This suggests that the association of seafood consumption with wealth and status diminished after the end of Roman rule.

Levels of literacy dropped

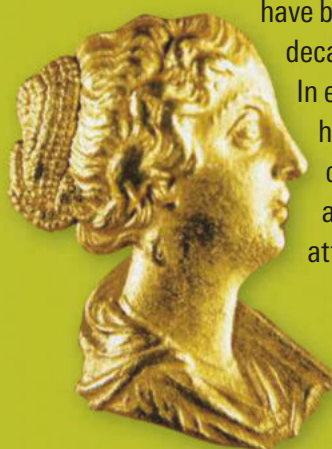
The discovery of writing implements such as bronze and iron *styli* suggests that literacy was widespread in Roman Britain, while graffiti on pottery shows many people at all social levels could write to some extent. This diminished dramatically post-409.



A wooden writing tablet from Vindolanda bearing a party invitation written in ink

Hairstyles changed

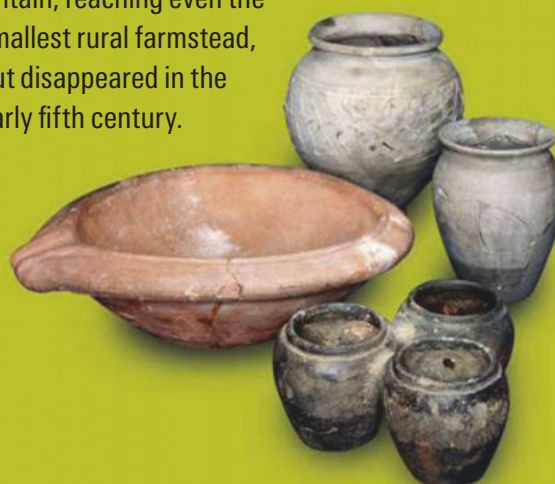
The lack of hairpins in fourth-century archaeological finds suggests that veils or other hair-coverings may have been popular in the final decades of Roman Britain. In early Saxon Britain, however, numerous finds of elaborate bone combs attest to entirely different attitudes towards hair.



Elaborate hairstyle: An image of Faustina II, wife of the emperor Marcus Aurelius

Fine tableware disappeared

Industrially made pottery was widespread in Roman Britain, reaching even the smallest rural farmstead, but disappeared in the early fifth century.



Wood replaced stone

Roman buildings (such as this villa at Chedworth near Cirencester) were made wholly or partly of brick and stone, and had tile roofs. After the fourth century, this style was supplanted in the east of England by smaller wooden buildings – although simple wood and stone buildings are likely to have been the norm in most rural settlements throughout the Roman period anyway.

Cremation reappeared

As elsewhere in the Roman empire, the practice of cremating the dead had gradually declined after the second century, but it re-emerged in eastern Britain in the fifth century.



A reconstruction of an Anglo-Saxon cremation urn from East Anglia

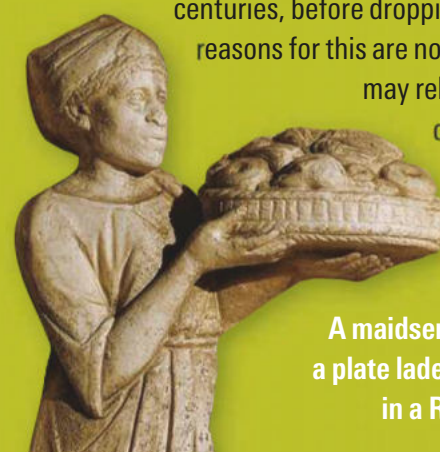


Hunting declined

Hunting was associated with status in late Roman Britain. Hunts are depicted on mosaics, and the bones of animals like deer are frequent finds in excavations. This diminished in the fifth century, and hunting did not revive as a high-class pastime until the seventh century.

People became taller!

Across western Europe, average height apparently increased by up to 2cm between the fourth and sixth centuries, before dropping again. The reasons for this are not clear but may relate to dietary changes.



A maidservant brings a plate laden with food in a Roman relief

It seems that the natives adopted Germanic dress and buildings rapidly. Evolution – not armageddon

the Council of Arles, which was the first representative meeting of Christian bishops in the western Roman empire, held in southern Gaul in 314. Christian symbols appear in remarkable murals at Lullingstone in Kent, as well as on personal ornaments, precious metal found in hoards, and a series of lead tanks possibly used for baptism. The Christian practice of covering heads may even explain the decline in finds of hairpins in late fourth-century Britain.

There are no confirmed late Roman churches in Britain, although reasonable arguments can be made for the presence of them at sites such as Lincoln and Vindolanda. In any case, Roman Christianity in all but the very west of Britain proved to be short-lived.

Hated by God and men

Other aspects of Roman Britain survived best in the west of the former province, too. Finds at places like Tintagel in Cornwall reveal a population importing wine, olive oil and fine pottery from the eastern Mediterranean during the fifth and sixth centuries. Curiously, these finds tend to turn up in areas that had previously shown relatively little interest in Roman life – which suggests that the conspicuous adoption of ‘Roman’ habits may have been regarded as a way of creating an identity distinct from the newcomers to the east.

According to some contemporary sources, these newcomers – referred to as *Angli* and *Saxones* – played a key role in this episode in British history. In this version of events, “impious Saxons, a race hated by both God and men” (as Gildas describes them) were initially employed to defend against other barbarians before turning against their paymasters and seizing territory. They were then reinforced by others from across the North Sea, a process that seems to have accelerated in the 440s.

On one level, this scenario is plausible. Barbarian troops had been part of the Roman army for centuries and were a mainstay of most late Roman forces. Their presence

in Britain would have been entirely expected. It’s unlikely, however, that groups numbering in the thousands could have overwhelmed a population of a few million. The Anglo-Saxon ‘colonisation’ of eastern Britain doubtless involved blood and violence, but the widespread appearance of Germanic styles of dress, burial and building suggests that many natives adopted such things rapidly, perhaps viewing them as a new way of participating in a changing and fragmented cultural and political landscape. Evolution, then, not armageddon.

This last point can, I think, help us understand life on the ground at the start of the fifth century. Participation in the Roman world had offered Britons a wide range of ways in which they could express ideas about who they were – from hairstyles and diet to holding political office. This, however, was a constantly changing process, as it had been for the past 350 years of Roman rule. And so, while the new circumstances of the fifth century presented challenges, they may have also brought opportunities.

At the same time, many of the things that we prize most about Roman Britain simply appear to have become irrelevant. After all, we too live in a society where coins could soon be a thing of the past. And if that poses problems for future archaeologists, then so be it. **H**

Will Bowden is associate professor in Roman archaeology at the University of Nottingham

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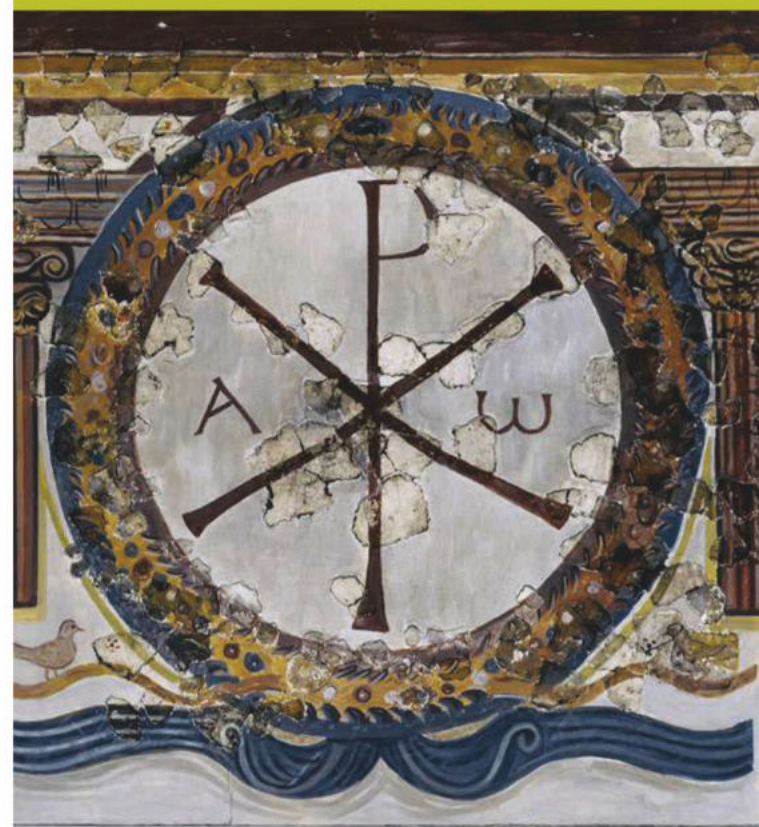
To hear Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss Roman Britain on BBC Radio 4’s *In Our Time*, go to bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00548xn



Silver lining

The fourth-century Mildenhall Great Dish. Britain has yielded more caches of precious metal from AD 300–500 than the rest of the empire combined

ALAMY/BRITISH MUSEUM



Holy writ A wall painting found in a Roman villa at Lullingstone in Kent bears a monogram referencing the name of Christ. But Roman Christianity would be short-lived

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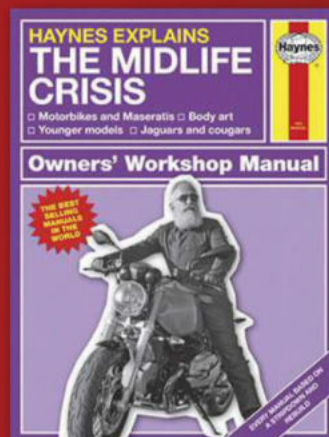
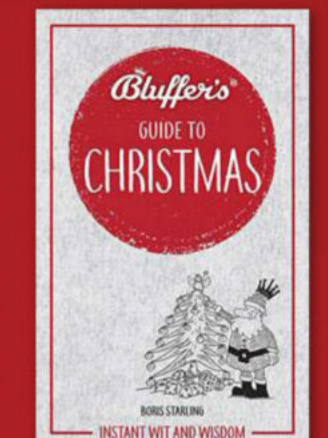
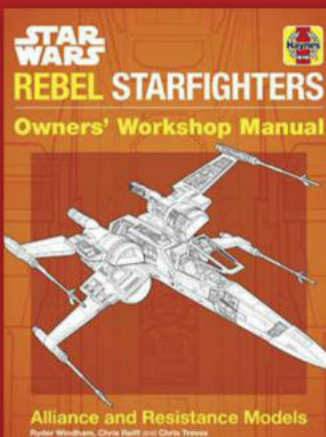
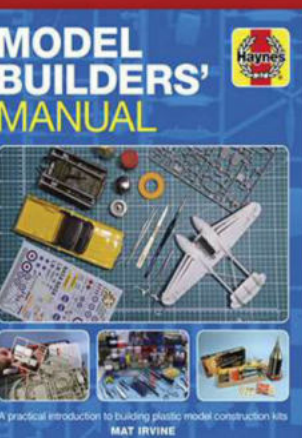
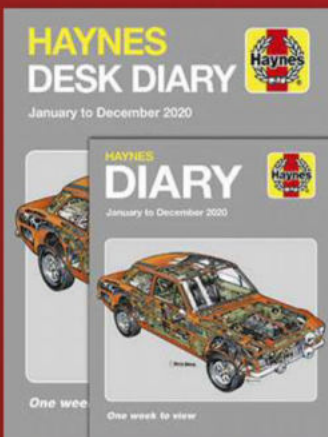
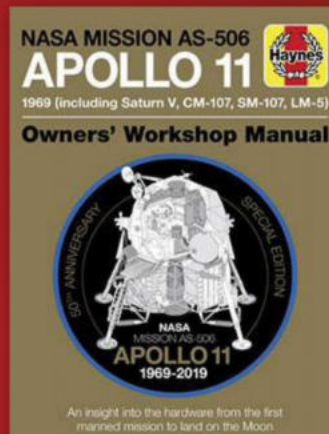
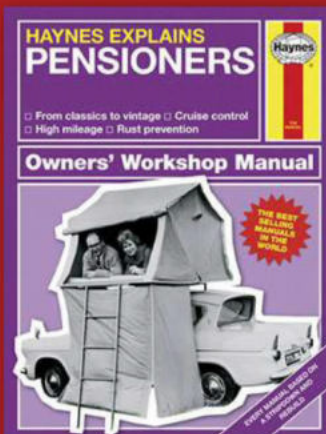
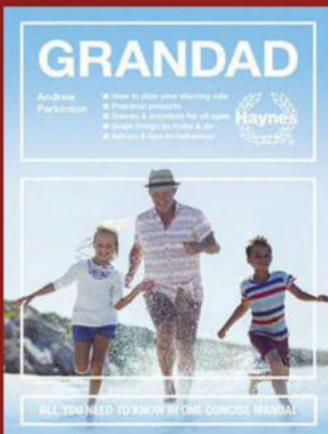
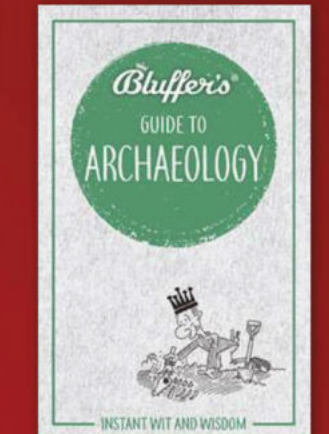
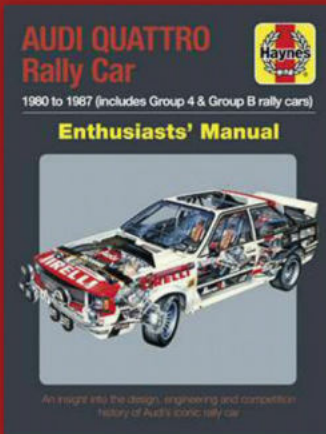
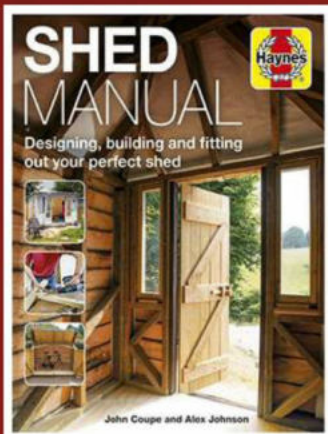
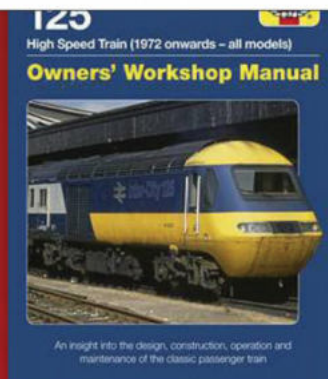
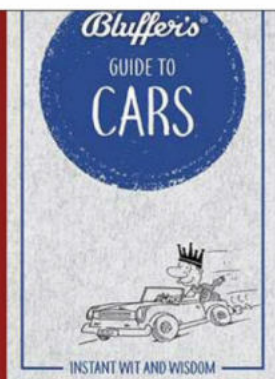
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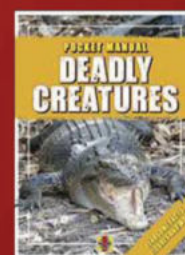
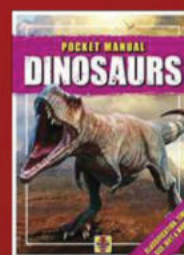
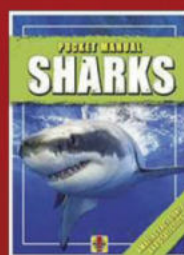
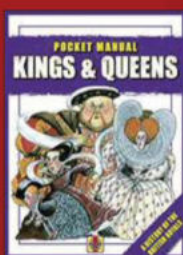
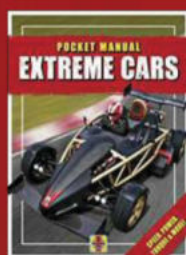
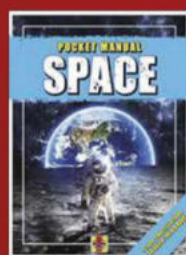
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How Britain saved Einstein

Exiled, homeless and on the run from Nazi assassins, 1933 was a grim year for Albert Einstein. Yet not all was lost, writes **Andrew Robinson**, as the famous physicist discovered during his visits to Britain



In late July 1933, six months after the Nazi regime came to power in Germany and forced many distinguished German Jews to leave their native land, Albert Einstein paid his one and only visit to the House of Commons in Britain. Born Jewish in Germany in 1879, the world's most famous scientist had observed closely the rise of Nazism from his home in Berlin in the 1920s while enduring vitriolic public criticism and even death threats. In March 1933, he had anticipated the German-Jewish exodus and, returning to Europe from the US, gone into voluntary exile in Belgium with his second wife, Elsa. Now he found himself in London on a political mission to help Germany's Jews, looking down from the Distinguished Visitors' Gallery of the House and listening to a speech under the parliamentary 10-minute rule. It proposed the motion: "That leave be given to bring in a bill to promote and extend opportunities of citizenship for Jews resident outside the British empire."

The speaker was a dashing, upper-class, rightwing Conservative member of parliament, Commander Oliver Locker-Lampson, who was personally – soon to be intimately – known to Einstein. A former admirer of Adolf Hitler, Locker-Lampson now opposed

the Nazis because of their anti-Jewish policy. He had first contacted Einstein in late March out of the blue, offering his home in London as a refuge: an offer declined by Einstein in favour of Belgium. A few days before his speech, the MP had arranged a private meeting between Einstein and Winston Churchill – then a backbencher – at Churchill's country house, Chartwell in Kent, where scientist and politician had agreed on the seriousness of the new Nazi threat to world peace. Churchill "is an eminently wise man", Einstein wrote immediately to his wife in Belgium. "It became quite clear to me that these people have planned well ahead and will act soon." Shortly after, Locker-Lampson had introduced Einstein to a former British prime minister, David Lloyd George. In the latter's house, the MP witnessed Einstein sign the visitors' book, after pausing for a moment at the 'Address' column to write "Ohne" – German for 'Without'.

Opening his speech, Locker-Lampson noted that he himself was neither Jewish nor anti-German. Indeed, after the end of the world war in 1918 (in which the commander had fought on the Russian front in support of the tsarists and against the communists, with the backing of Churchill) he noted that he had pleaded in the House of

Commons for fair play for Germany, on the grounds that the German people had been misled by their leaders in 1914. Now, however, German leaders seemed to be repeating the earlier misdirection of their countrymen, he said. Then Locker-Lampson made reference to the House's current distinguished visitor: "[Germany] has even turned upon her most glorious citizen – Einstein."

He continued: "[Today] Einstein is without a home. He had to write his name in a visitors' book in England, and when he came to write his address, he put 'Without any'. The Huns have stolen his savings. The road-hog and racketeer of Europe have plundered his place. They have even taken away his violin. A man who more than any other approximated to a citizen of the world without a house! How proud we must be that we have afforded him a shelter temporarily at Oxford to work, and long may the tides of tyranny beat in vain against these shores."

During the business of 'questions', MPs found them-

MPs glanced upwards towards their visitor, as lighting from above threw into relief the white-suited Einstein's world-famous aureole of grey hair

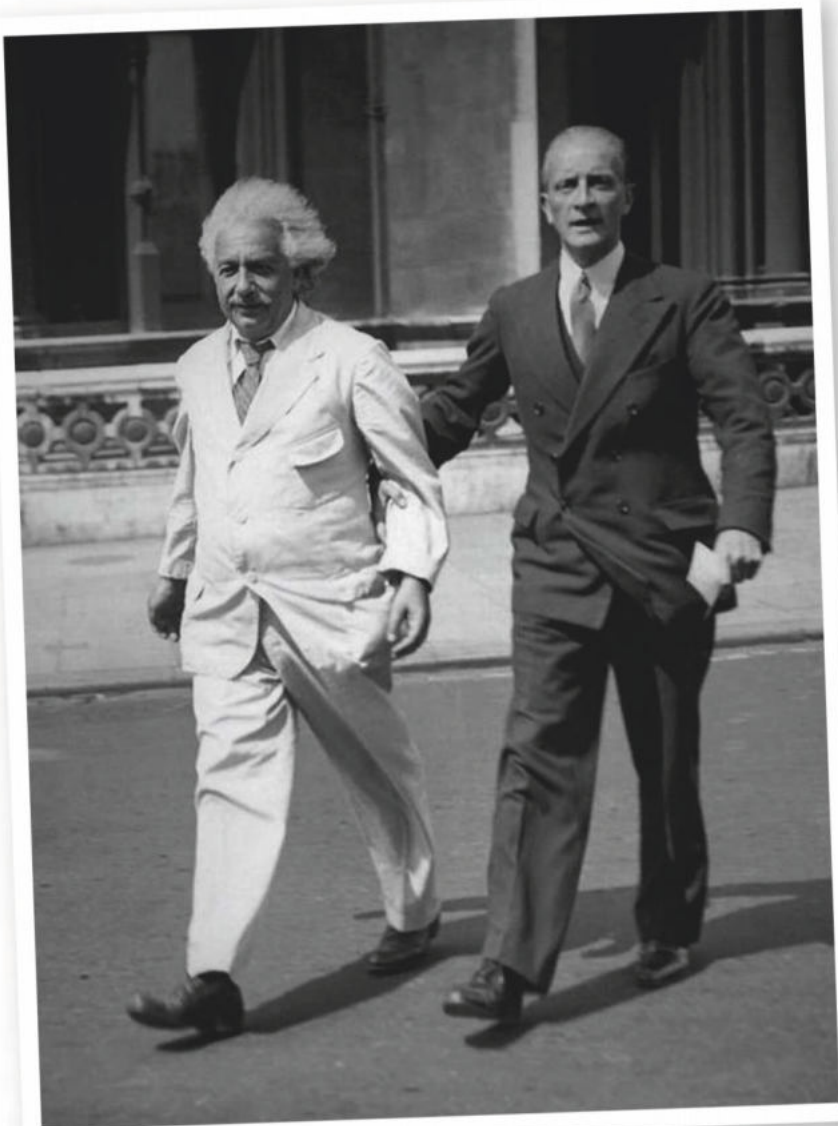
selves constantly glancing upwards towards their almost-legendary visitor, as diffused lighting from above threw into relief the white-suited Einstein's world-famous aureole of grey hair. The House voted to support Locker-Lampson's bill on its first reading. Afterwards, as Einstein stood with Locker-Lampson in the lobby, "Members eagerly came forward to be introduced to the greatest scientist of the age", wrote the *Jewish Chronicle*. The Nazi newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter* took note in its report headlined, "Einsteinian Jewish theatre in British parliament", which accused Locker-Lampson of having staged the performance for the purposes of self-publicity in the foreign press. His combative references to the predatory "Hun" naturally provoked a bitter Nazi denunciation of the MP.

Hateful weapons

Einstein returned to Belgium, but soon extremists were targeting him for assassination. The fury of the Nazi leadership had been provoked by two acts of Einstein in August. First, he had publicly repudiated his militant faith in pacifism by calling for European rearmament against the German threat. "I loathe all armies and any kind of violence; yet I am firmly convinced that, in the present world situation, these hateful weapons offer the only effective protection," he informed a severely disappointed Lord Arthur Ponsonby of War Resisters' International in London.

Secondly, Einstein had very publicly endorsed a communist-compiled book, *The Brown Book of the Hitler Terror*. This eyewitness report from Germany with horrifying photographs noted that "the National Socialist leaders... have organised the pogroms and lynchings, the burnings and the pillories, the tortures of the first, second and third degrees". Although the book officially had no author, Nazi leaders were convinced (wrongly) that Einstein had written it.

Belgian policemen, on instructions from the Belgian king, protected Einstein night



Campaign trail Einstein near parliament with Oliver Locker-Lampson, July 1933. He went there to throw his support behind the MP's campaign to offer citizenship to Germany's exiled Jews

and day. But he was plainly at risk, especially after the murder by Nazi agents of an Einstein associate, Jewish philosopher Theodor Lessing, in Czechoslovakia on 30 August. On 7 September came international press announcements that a secret Nazi terror organisation, the Fehme (associated with the murder of Germany's foreign minister, Walther Rathenau, a friend of Einstein, in 1922), had placed a price on Einstein's head: £1,000 according to the London *Daily Herald*; 20,000 marks said the *New York Times*.

"Whether the story is true or not we do not know," warned the *Sunday Times* on 10 September, but if it were, "the Nazi hot-heads" should "take fair warning and think twice of this folly before it is too late. If they should commit this crime against humanity, the conscience of the whole civilised world will rise against them, and the German government will find itself execrated and isolated as no German government has been before or since the war."

By the time this comment appeared, Einstein was again in England. On 9 September, at his wife's insistence, he had packed a few bags with vital books and papers and caught a boat and train from Belgium to London. He was heading not for Oxford – whose university had welcomed him in 1921 on his first visit to Britain, and again in 1931 and 1932, then sheltered him as a refugee in May–June 1933 – but instead a wooden holiday hut belonging to Locker-Lampson on a remote heath in Norfolk. There he could supposedly concentrate on theoretical physics, away from prying eyes.

Hovering gunmen

In reality, a bizarre mixture of secrecy and publicity surrounded his four-week British visit in September and October – no doubt partly calculated by Einstein's publicity-hungry host, Locker-Lampson. On 12 September, the front pages of British national newspapers carried a dramatic photograph (shown overleaf) of Einstein sitting outside his hut with a "private guard of friends": the commander in the foreground with a wind-blown Einstein, and a local gamekeeper hovering in the background – the two Englishmen holding guns – plus one of the commander's two female secretaries, apparently attentive to the mathematical calculations of the professor. The secret location on Roughton Heath was given only as "near Cromer", but without too much detective work any Nazi agent worth his salt could have worked it out.

In early October, after the sculptor Jacob Epstein had visited the Norfolk encampment to model a bust of the physicist (held by the Tate, but not on display), Einstein headed back to London. There Locker-Lampson had



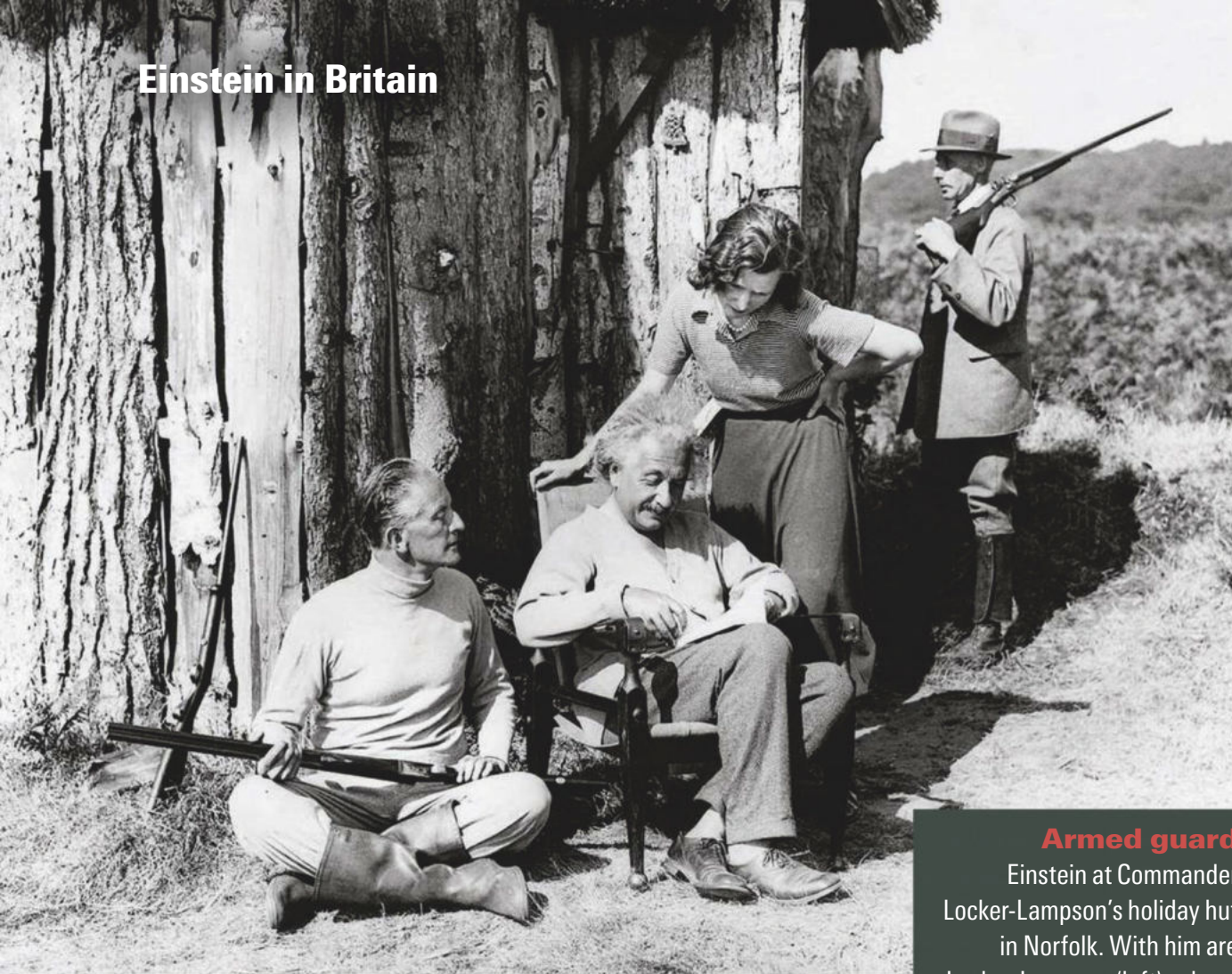
Call to arms Einstein (second left) at a 'No More War' rally in 1923. A decade later, confronted by Nazi militarism, the scientist renounced his pacifism and urged European rearmament against the German threat

Marked man

With the mathematician Walther Mayer on the beach at Le Coq-sur-Mer, Belgium, his home in exile. In September 1933, amid rumours of a bounty on his head, Einstein fled to Britain



Einstein in Britain

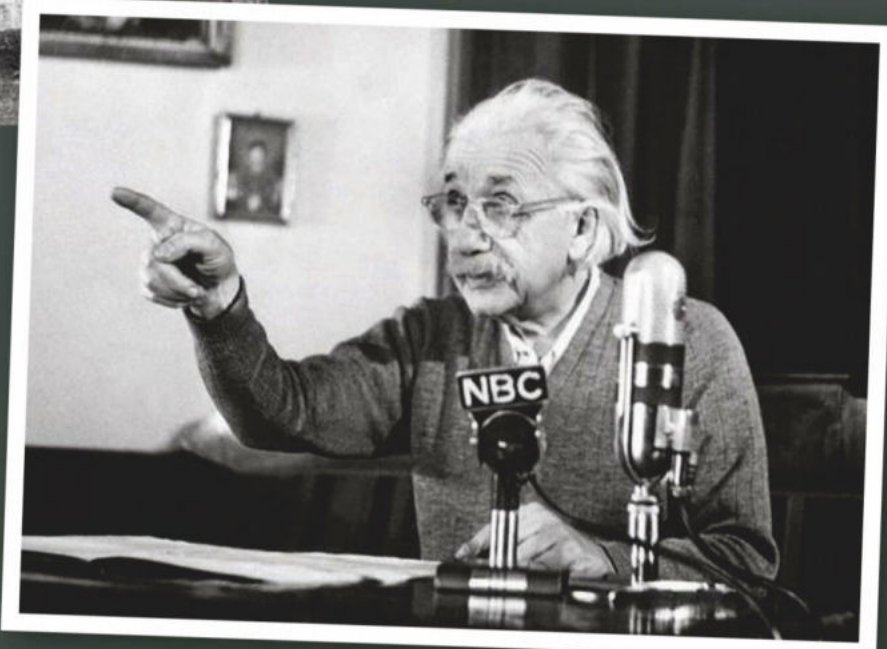


Armed guard
Einstein at Commander Locker-Lampson's holiday hut in Norfolk. With him are Locker-Lampson (left), a local gamekeeper and one of the commander's secretaries



Seeing double
With the sculptor Jacob Epstein in the Norfolk hideout. Epstein's bust of Einstein is part of the Tate's collections

"No matter how long I live I shall never forget the kindness which I have received from the people of England," Einstein told a reporter



Making a point

Arguing against the production of the H-bomb in 1950. Einstein warned of the existential threat posed by nuclear war until his death five years later

organised a public meeting at the Royal Albert Hall at which the German physicist and British speakers might raise charitable donations for academic Jewish refugees from Germany. Einstein, as the star attraction, spoke on "Science and civilization" in his hesitant, peculiar and touching English, to massive applause from an overflowing audience – other than a group of Blackshirts from the British Union of Fascists who were in attendance. Without the "intellectual and individual freedom" won by our ancestors, said Einstein, "there would have been no Shakespeare, no Goethe, no Newton, no Faraday, no Pasteur and no Lister" – and of course no Einstein. As William Beveridge, another speaker, remarked in his live broadcast on BBC radio that evening: "I had never seen him before. Einstein was a legend to me. It is like seeing Christopher Columbus or Julius Caesar."

Afterwards, on the steps of the hall, Einstein told a newspaper reporter: "I could not believe that it was possible that such spontaneous affection could be extended to one who is a wanderer on the face of the earth. The kindness of your people has touched my heart so deeply that I cannot find words to express in English what I feel." He concluded: "I shall leave England for America at the end of the week, but no matter how long I live I shall never forget the kindness which I have received from the people of England."

Einstein kept his word. Although he would live the rest of his life in America, based at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton – deeply involved with both physics and Cold War politics – and would never return to Europe, he remained at heart an anglophile. The only scientists portrayed on the walls of his house in Princeton were British: Isaac Newton, Michael Faraday and James Clerk Maxwell.

In July 1955, three months after Einstein's death, the British philosopher and mathematician Bertrand Russell announced the Russell-Einstein Manifesto to an audience in London. Signing this stirring document, which presciently warned the world of the dangers of a nuclear war, had been Einstein's last public act. It was a fitting end to his long association with the British people. **H**

Andrew Robinson is the author of 25 books in the arts and sciences. His latest, *Einstein on the Run: How Britain Saved the World's Greatest Scientist*, was published by Yale in September

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False impressions
Eleanor of Aquitaine depicted in a 12th-century prayer book. The queen consort of first France and then England – and mother of kings Richard I and John – “is arguably the most inaccurately portrayed woman in medieval history”, writes Sara Cockerill

Eleanor of Aquitaine...

~~ADULTERER~~

~~TERRIBLE
MOTHER~~

~~DETERMINED
REBEL~~

~~MEDIEVAL
SUPERWOMAN~~

~~ENEMY OF THE CHURCH~~

Sara Cockerill explodes five of the myths that have grown up around one of medieval Europe's most remarkable women



The CV of Eleanor of Aquitaine (c1122–1204) is one you wouldn't dare to make up. An heiress to half of France at 13, who became queen, first of France (as wife of Louis VII) and then of England (thanks to her marriage to Henry II). A survivor of battles on crusade, and in France of at least four abduction attempts. A wife divorced by Louis for barrenness, who bore at least 10 children. A mother of three kings (Henry the Young King, Richard I and John) and two queens, not to mention the great-grandmother of two saints. A reputed rebel against Henry, and his prisoner for 15 years, who ruled his lands for her sons. A woman who, at 80, commanded the defence of a castle against the attacks of her own grandson, Arthur of Brittany.

Eleanor was truly one of the most remarkable women in medieval history. But she was also one of the most inaccurately portrayed, as the following examples demonstrate...

Eleanor of Aquitaine with Louis VII of France, who had their marriage annulled on technical grounds, but in reality because she had borne him no sons, only two daughters

1 A dark legend

Why tales of Eleanor's serial infidelity are wide of the mark

The image of Eleanor as a serially unfaithful sensualist underpins many portrayals of her. The two major accusations are that Eleanor was not just unfaithful to her first husband, Louis VII, but incestuously so. It's claimed that she had an affair with her uncle Raymond of Antioch while on the Second Crusade and/or that she had slept with her second husband Henry II's father, Geoffrey 'the Handsome' of Anjou – either on crusade or at court. Other later suggestions for the victims of Eleanor's lusts are William Marshal (the knight and statesman who famously served five English kings), and the formidable Muslim warrior-king – and scourge of the crusaders – Saladin.

The accusation that comes nearest to having any foundation at all in the sources is the one relating to Raymond. But it is actually not until more than 30 years later that the allegation of infidelity was levelled at Eleanor – and then by chroniclers of questionable reliability working for Henry,



who by this stage had imprisoned Eleanor and had an axe to grind.

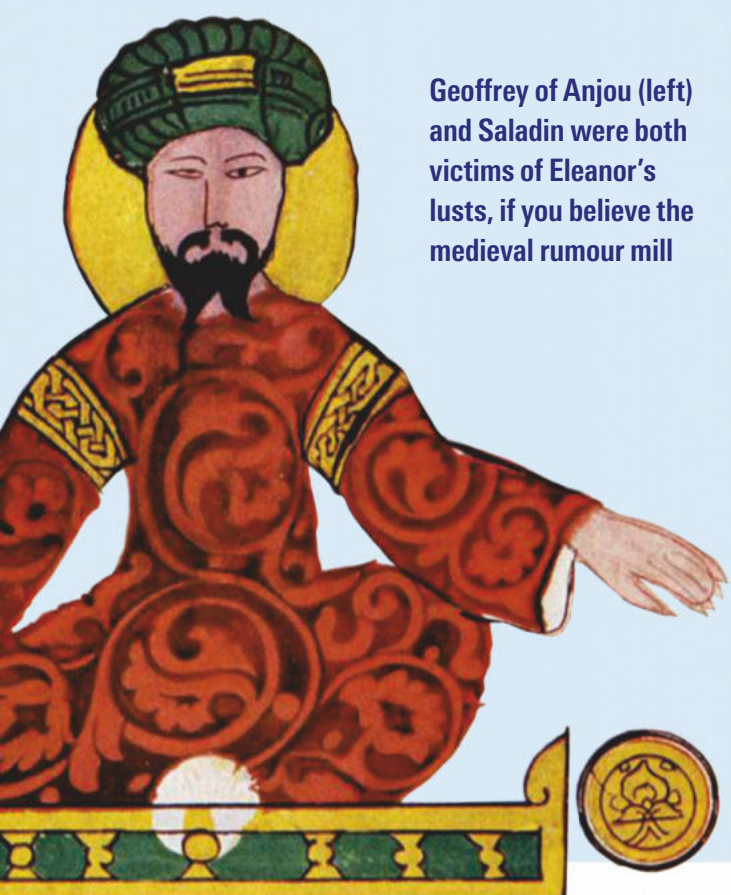
What seems to have happened is that Eleanor and Raymond spent rather too much time in family and political discussion, to the intense displeasure of Louis, who is known to have been jealous of his wife. Eleanor sided with her uncle over the crusade's itinerary and fell out badly with Louis on that, his failures as a war leader – and possibly also as a husband.

Eleanor ultimately demanded an annulment of their marriage, to which she was technically entitled on the grounds of their close familial links. Louis flatly refused and constrained her to leave Antioch – in essence he kidnapped her. Unsurprisingly this could not be kept quiet and gave rise to much gossip, in which Eleanor's name was inevitably – and without foundation – linked with that of Raymond in scandalous terms.

The Geoffrey of Anjou story surfaces at just the time when Henry II was unsuccessfully seeking to divorce Eleanor – in the fall-out from her siding with their sons during the revolt of 1173–74 (see box 3) – and can be traced straight back to him. In short, it just doesn't add up: Geoffrey was not on the crusade and no source at the time gives any whiff of such a scandal.

The other candidates are delightful inventions of the later 'Black Legend', which surrounded Eleanor from early in the 13th century. The first, it seems, didn't emerge until Elizabethan times, and ignores the limited time that Marshal was actually in the same location as Eleanor. As for Saladin, he was 10 years old when Eleanor was on crusade, and living in Damascus – which Eleanor never visited.

GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY



Geoffrey of Anjou (left) and Saladin were both victims of Eleanor's lusts, if you believe the medieval rumour mill

2 A mother under fire

Did Eleanor put personal gain before her children?
Not if their actions are anything to go by

Eleanor was a bad mother – that appears to be a universally acknowledged 'truth'. She abandoned her daughters by Louis first to go on crusade and then because she was determined to secure an annulment from her first husband. She dumped her youngest two children by Henry in Fontevraud Abbey. Her sons' rebellion against Henry (see box 3) was a consequence of her poor care. In fact, about the best thing that historians are prepared to say about Eleanor's maternal qualities is that being a distant mother was a norm for her time and station.

But unpick the evidence and what do we see? The law as it stood dictated that Eleanor had no right to her own children after the annulment. Yet Marie and Alice, her daughters, both show some signs of retaining fond memories of Eleanor. Marie later befriended her half-siblings, while a work written by her chaplain features Eleanor. Alice's daughter became one of

the intimates of Eleanor's old age.

As for Eleanor's children by Henry, the financial records demonstrate that she usually kept them with her, even as she travelled. The 'abandonment' of John and Joanna at Fontevraud is debatable. If it occurred at all, it is explained by security considerations – Eleanor's rule in Poitou (in western France) came at a time when her vassals were up in arms and her military adviser there was murdered in front of her.

There's no denying that the relationship between Eleanor's sons was dysfunctional. Yet all of them provided clear evidence of their affection for their mother: her oldest surviving son, Young Henry, interceded for her on his deathbed; Richard I left her in charge of his empire while he was on crusade, and summoned her more than 100 miles to his deathbed; Geoffrey named a daughter for her – as did King John, whose most successful military venture was rescuing Eleanor from a siege.



Eleanor's son Richard I and daughter Joanna, queen of Sicily, greet French king Philip Augustus. Eleanor was closer to her children than some historians have suggested, argues Sara Cockerill

3 Revolting accusations

There's little evidence that Eleanor incited her sons' revolt

The portrayal of Eleanor as a determined rebel against Henry II is a tenacious one, and dates from shortly after her sons' 'Great Revolt' against their father in 1173–74. For 10 or so years after the failure of that rebellion, chroniclers suggested that Eleanor had supported or even incited it. In later years, writers, including Shakespeare, widely blamed Eleanor for leading her three rebellious sons – Henry the Young King; the future Richard I; and Geoffrey, Duke of Brittany – astray.

Yet a raft of evidence suggests that Eleanor was far from central to the revolt. In the first place, the timeline of the rebellion does not fit this theory. It started with 'the Young King' and his associates, far from Eleanor's powerbase in Poitou. Secondly those rebels who *did* hail from Poitou/Aquitaine were predominantly the

same people who had seized every opportunity to make life difficult for Eleanor's 'foreign' husbands in the past.

Finally, nowhere is there any clear account of Eleanor's involvement in the rebellion – despite the fact that Henry had many authors in his pay, and a strong motivation to bolster his case for a divorce. There is no hint that – like the formidable Petronilla, Countess of Leicester – she rode into battle. In fact, the most reliable chroniclers' careful wording suggests that they doubt tales of her active participation: they speak cagily in 'it is said' and 'one hears' terms.

Even Henry's own 'pen for hire', Peter of Blois, never accuses Eleanor of rebellion – or even of encouraging the uprising. His only complaint was that Eleanor remained in Poitou and didn't rush to her husband's



Henry the Young King – shown here at his coronation – was the driving force behind the 'Great Revolt'

aid. At most, the evidence suggests that, after the rebellion had started, Eleanor assisted her younger sons to escape Henry's lands and then refused to deliver herself up to her husband.



The French abbot Bernard of Clairvaux, who saluted Eleanor's "most famous generosity and kindness"

4 God on her side

The tales that Eleanor waged a lifelong war on the clergy seem decidedly shaky

For centuries, biographers have revelled in portraying Eleanor as a woman at odds with the patriarchy, particularly when that patriarchy took the form of the church. We're told that she loathed Thomas Becket, berated Pope Celestine III, and drew criticism from prominent clergymen such as Bernard of Clairvaux.

Yet, in reality, Eleanor enjoyed close ties to distinguished churchmen throughout her life. Among them was Geoffrey de Loroux, archbishop of Bordeaux, who became Eleanor's guardian on her father's death, arranged her first marriage (and later annulment), and remained a key supporter until his own death. Meanwhile, contemporary records show that Eleanor corresponded with Bernard of Clairvaux amicably – he speaks of her "most famous generosity and kindness".

There's little reason to believe that Eleanor hated Becket. In fact, what evidence we do have suggests that she supported him to a limited extent – and certainly didn't encourage her husband Henry in his dispute with the archbishop. She was also a correspondent of Cardinal

Hyacinth Bobone, Becket's most reliable supporter on the continent. On one occasion, Eleanor and her mother-in-law, Empress Matilda, jointly interceded with Henry on behalf of Becket's allies.

And what of claims of disagreements between Eleanor and Pope Celestine III? These rest on the so-called "Eleanor, by the wrath of God" letters, in which she apparently rebuked the pontiff. However, it has long been known that these letters are absent from the papal records. They were written, in fact, by Peter of Blois, probably as show pieces. Add to this the fact that Pope Celestine III was actually Eleanor's friend, the aforementioned Hyacinth Bobone, and the case for this clash disappears in a puff of smoke.

In reality, Eleanor enjoyed good relations with the church, often describing herself in her correspondence with churchmen as "*humble* Queen of England". When Henry sought a divorce from her, he had every reason to expect that the ecclesiastical authorities would mandate it. Yet instead, they set their face against him.



An illustration shows Eleanor with Henry II, who ceded power to his wife increasingly sparingly

5 The superwoman delusion

Remarkable? Yes. But Eleanor's life was far from unique

Eleanor of Aquitaine is often described as a woman beyond compare, a feminist heroine – to one scholar, the first heroine of the feminist movement. The popular consensus is that the power she exercised was unique, in an era when women's roles were marginal, powerless – even servile.

Over the past 50 years or so, however, this theory has been debunked thoroughly. Evidence has been building steadily that Eleanor was far less of an outlier than previous generations of historians have had us believe. If she is exceptional, it's only in the amount of publicity that her story has generated over the past eight centuries.

Firstly, it wasn't unusual for women to inherit vast tracts of land in the southern counties of France. And she was far from the only 12th-century queen to wield power in Europe and the Holy Land: her hostess on crusade was Melisende, the ruling queen of Jerusalem. At the time of Eleanor's birth, Urraca of León called herself 'Queen of all the Spains', while Eleanor's own cousin, Petronilla, would become queen of Aragon on the Iberian peninsula.

And, beyond the biographers' stereo-

types, it appears that Eleanor exercised little power during her time as queen of France. Even in her 'own' lands, her role was confined to merely confirming her husband Louis' acts.

It's true that she had a lot more influence as the wife and queen of Henry II. But that influence was limited and supervised – even as regent she was hemmed in by Henry's nominated 'advisers'. Over time, Henry gradually whittled down the limited powers he'd ceded to her, until she was not even issuing confirmatory charters over her own lands.

All that changed, of course, when Henry died and his sons – first Richard, then John – sat upon the English throne. Eleanor ruled on Richard's behalf during his long absences from England. And she helped secure John's accession to the throne, and brokered deals for him in her lands, where he was not well known.

But that doesn't make Eleanor exceptional; in fact, it was quite normal for noble widows to assume such responsibilities. Widows routinely gained control of dower properties and were expected to manage

them in their own right. There was also an expectation that they preside over their children's affairs. The records, not just in the south of France – but in Normandy and England too – are replete with formidable dowagers exercising real power, often acting as de facto heads of the family.

There has been a tendency to project back into Eleanor's earlier life the same level of power that she enjoyed in her 'golden years' – when there is little evidence to sustain that theory. Eleanor was a remarkable woman. But the roles she performed through her long and eventful life were far from unconventional. **H**

Sara Cockerill is the author of *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Queen of France and England, Mother of Empires* (Amberley, 2019). She will be discussing Eleanor with Dan Jones on our podcast, historyextra.com/podcast

LISTEN You can listen to Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss Eleanor of Aquitaine on BBC Radio 4's *In Our Time*: bbc.co.uk/programmes/b06yfhqk



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BBC HiSTORY MAGAZINE

URGENT APPEAL: help Syrian refugee parents like Khitam to protect their children through the winter.



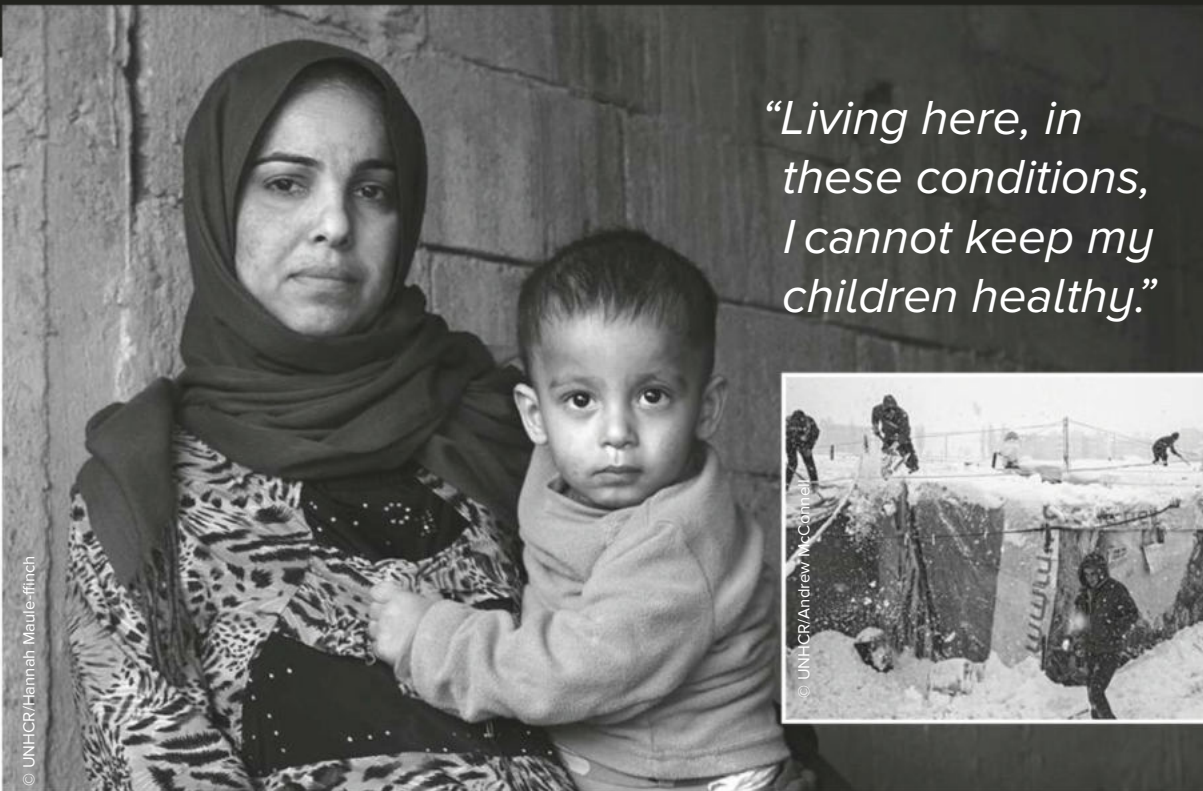
Khitam lives with her children, husband Abdelsalam, and his elderly parents in a single, damp room of a half-built apartment block near Tripoli, Lebanon.

There are holes in the walls and ceiling, and they share a toilet with other refugee families crammed into the building. Khitam and Abdelsalam are mentally and physically exhausted after years of struggling to survive, unable to earn a living and fighting a daily, relentless battle to feed their children. Right now, they are terrified by the prospect of another winter in their cold, uninsulated single room. Another winter where they will feel every blast of icy wind. Another winter where every time their children cough or sneeze they will fear they have contracted a lethal respiratory condition like pneumonia or tuberculosis. UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency,

needs your support to help parents protect their children this winter.

Please will you give £75 to provide a refugee family like Khitam's with a winter survival kit to protect against the freezing weather?

The kit contains essentials such as a heating stove, thermal blankets, warm clothes and a tarpaulin for insulation. It could mean survival for a family like Khitam's. Two winters ago, as a result of their exposed and unsanitary living conditions, Khitam and all of her children became ill. Baby Bilal had a high temperature and diarrhoea. Her sons Khaled (3, pictured) and Abdul Rahman (8) had chest infections and their sister



"Living here, in these conditions, I cannot keep my children healthy."



Fatimah (4) contracted worms. Khitam herself developed painful growths on her throat and lost her voice. Without access to a free healthcare system like we have in the UK, Khitam became overwhelmed with worry about how to pay for the treatment and medicines her children needed.

"I felt helpless. My children were coughing and crying and there was nothing I could do."

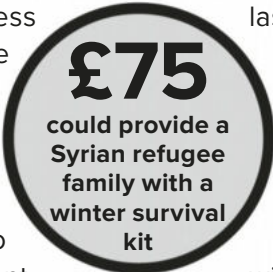
Khitam believes that

without assistance from UNHCR "my children would be dead". Across Lebanon and Jordan, seven of the last eight winters have brought heavy snowfall and temperatures regularly drop below 0°C.

Right now, with the conflict continuing in Syria, 1.7 million refugees in Lebanon and Jordan remain unable to return home. They are living, like Khitam's family, in derelict buildings, or in makeshift shelters made

of little more than wood and plastic sheeting. With temperatures falling, the lives of the most vulnerable – young children, pregnant women and the elderly – are at grave risk.

With a gift of £75 you can provide a Winter Survival Kit containing a stove, blankets, warm clothes and a tarpaulin to help a family insulate and heat their home. Please give today – you could save the lives of children like Khitam's.



Give at unhcr.org/wintersupport or call **0800 029 3883**

With £75, you can give a winter survival kit containing:

STOVE
For heating and cooking. An absolute essential.

TARPAULIN
For insulation. Keeps the cold out and the warmth in.

BLANKET
Families left their homes with nothing. A simple blanket could save a life.

WINTER CLOTHES
Hats, gloves and scarves keep families warm, indoors and out.

Yes, I will help Syrian refugee families survive the winter

Please accept my gift of: ☐ £75 ☐ £150 ☐ £225 My own choice of £

Please post urgently to: **Freepost UNHCR**. You do not need a stamp. BHPAW119B

Please debit my: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Maestro Maestro only

Card no.

Valid from Expiry date Issue no. Maestro only

Signature Date

☐ I enclose a cheque or postal order made payable to UNHCR (Currently CAF cheques cannot be accepted)

Please tell us if you are happy to hear more about UNHCR's work: ☐ By email ☐ By phone

We will use your details to process your donation and to keep you up to date with our work, fundraising activities and other events. You can read more about how we use your data in our Privacy Policy www.unhcr.org/uk/privacy-policy You can opt out of any communications at any time by emailing supportercare@unhcr.org or by calling 0800 029 3883

Title First name Last name

Address

Postcode

Email Phone

The Varangian Guard, as shown in the 12th-century *Madrid Skylitzes*. Around this time, the guard, which protected the Byzantine emperor, was apparently dominated by English warriors who had fled the Norman conquest



The Anglo-Saxons' eastern odyssey

As unlikely scenarios go, the one that saw a band of English exiles fleeing William the Conqueror and setting up a colony on the shore of the Black Sea takes some beating. **Caitlin Green** tells the story of a remarkable medieval adventure

A medieval New England

Anglo-Saxon resistance had been resourceful and determined. It had seriously troubled the new Norman regime. But, by the mid-1070s, it had become clear even to the most optimistic of rebels that William the Conqueror had won the battle for England. The Anglo-Norman chronicler Orderic Vitalis tells us that, in the wake of their defeat at Hastings, “the English groaned aloud for their lost liberty and plotted ceaselessly to find some way of shaking off a yoke that was so intolerable”. That yoke remained firmly in place, however, and so, a little under 10 years after William’s invasion, the Anglo-Saxon lords were left with a stark choice.

The options they faced were two-fold: they could stay and see what Norman rule would bring, or they could abandon England to its conquerors and seek to make a new life elsewhere. Several thousand English nobles and their followers seem to have decided to take this last option. But they didn’t simply flee to neighbouring regions of Europe. Instead they sailed right across the Mediterranean, establishing a new homeland for themselves thousands of miles away – creating a medieval New England on the northern coastline of the Black Sea.

A host of heathens

So how much do we know about this remarkable Anglo-Saxon odyssey? The fullest descriptions of the vanquished lords’ decision to quit their homeland is contained within the pages of the early 13th-century *Chronicon Laudunensis* and the 14th-century Icelandic *Saga of Edward the Confessor* (*Játvarðar saga*) – both of which are thought to be based on a lost 12th-century account. “When the English chiefs were sure that the Danes would not help them against William...” the *saga* tell us, “then they left their estates and fled away from the land with a great host” in 350 ships. The exiles were led by “three earls and eight barons”, of whom the foremost was an “earl of Gloucester” named Siward – probably one of the Anglo-Saxon lords of this name who joined Hereward the Wake’s famous rebellion against the Normans in 1071.

The English fleet is said to have set sail for the straits of Gibraltar, before voyaging around the western Mediterranean, raiding and adventuring along the way. The *Játvarðar saga* tells us that the Anglo-Saxon



The nobles had two choices: to see what Norman rule would bring, or quit England. They chose the latter

exiles attacked Septem (modern Ceuta) on the north coast of Africa – where they slew “a host of heathen men” and obtained a great “fee in gold and silver” – and that they also launched assaults on Majorca and Minorca.

Eventually, however, the English exiles heard of “great strife out of Micklegarth [Constantinople], and how heathen folk beleaguered the city both by sea and land”. They therefore sailed to the aid of the Byzantine empire, arriving (so the *Chronicon Laudunensis* tells us) in 1075. There, we learn, they fought so boldly against the “heathen folk” (presumably the Turks, who did indeed threaten Byzantium around this time) that the emperor offered to take them into his service – not as rank-and-file soldiers but as members of his personal bodyguard: the Varangian Guard.

Neither the *Játvarðar saga* nor the *Chronicon* reveal what the Anglo-Saxon exiles made of Constantinople – the capital of the Byzantine empire and one of the greatest and most populous cities in the world. But its massive defensive walls, porticoed streets and monumental architecture – the most



Hostile force

William the Conqueror's fleet sails for England, as depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry. Many Anglo-Saxons would find his domination of their homeland "intolerable"

impressive example of which was surely the remarkable cathedral of Hagia Sophia – must have proved awe-inspiring to men used to England's relatively small cities.

As the nerve-centre of an empire, Constantinople would also have offered the English exiles a wealth of new experiences, as the *Chronicon*'s account of one of those exiles, a man named Hardigt, implies:

"He was reputed to be the strongest of all the Angli, for which reason he was suspect to the Greeks, who cunningly let loose a lion to devour him," the *Chronicon* relates. "Hardigt was alone in the courtyard of the palace. But he ran to the marble columns that stood in the atrium of the palace to use them as protection against the lion. Then (by a series of adroit manoeuvres) he succeeded in braining the lion by bashing its head on a column."

We're then told that, for his troubles, the lion-slaying Hardigt earned himself a promotion to chief of the Varangian Guard, before becoming commander of the imperial fleet. But can we give this story any credence? Could an English émigré *really* have secured



Epic journey Our map shows the route the exiles reportedly took after leaving England in the mid-1070s. After attacking Septem, they settled in Constantinople, before apparently establishing a colony on the Black Sea coast



Wonder of the world

The Hagia Sophia in modern-day Istanbul. In the late 11th century, this architectural masterpiece (then a Christian cathedral) would surely have filled English visitors with awe

a post at the very pinnacle of the Byzantine navy? The historian Krijnie Ciggaar certainly considers the claims credible, suggesting these appointments took place in the later 1080s/1090s. She highlights a reference in the Byzantine author Kekaumenos's late 11th-century *Strategikon* that complains of the emperor favouring the "foreigner who has come to us from England" and "making him head of a department of state or general".

While the *Chronicon* and *Játvarðar saga* may contain the most detailed descriptions of the English exiles' escapades, they are far from the only sources to mention an epic



Martial arts

An English warrior kills the Norwegian king Harald Hardrada (wielding axe) during the battle of Stamford Bridge, 1066. Soon, such warriors would prove their martial prowess in the eastern Mediterranean

Anglo-Saxon voyage east in the 1070s. Orderic Vitalis says that some of the defeated Anglo-Saxons who couldn't bear to live under Norman rule travelled into "remote lands and bravely offered their arms" to the Byzantine emperor. And when a Canterbury monk named Joseph visited the Byzantine capital in around 1090, he encountered there "men from his own homeland... who were part of the emperor's household". His contemporary, Goscelin of Canterbury, refers to an unnamed "honourable man" from England who, "along with many noble exiles from the fatherland, migrated to Constantinople; he obtained such favour with the emperor and empress as well as with other powerful men as to receive command

over prominent troops and over a great number of companions".

If these reports are to be believed, the English émigrés seem to have made a success of their new lives in the eastern Mediterranean. But soon, according to the *Chronicon* and *Játvarðar saga*, they sought a permanent a settlement of their own – a 'Nova Anglia' or 'New England', as the *Chronicon* puts it. Both the *Chronicon* and *Játvarðar saga* relate that the exiles, under the leadership of Earl Siward, begged the emperor "to give them some towns or cities which they might own and their heirs after them". The emperor is said to have responded that there was "a land lying north in the sea, which had lain of old under the emperor of



A home from home The Crimean peninsula, where English exiles apparently established a 'Nova Anglia', with the blessing of the Byzantine emperor

Micklegarth, but in after days the heathen had won it and abode in it". In short, the emperor agreed that if the English could conquer this land, then it was theirs.

The *Játvarðar saga* continues: "Earl Sigurd and his men... took that land into possession and gave it a name, and called it England. To the towns that were in the land and to those which they built they gave the names of the towns in England. They called them both London and York, and by the names of other great towns in England... The land lies six days' and nights' sail across the sea in the east and north-east from Micklegarth [ie across the Black Sea]... and that folk has abode there ever since."

London in the sun?

Like the tale of Hardigt's lion-slaying, it's all too easy to dismiss the idea of a wandering band of Anglo-Saxons pitching up on the banks of the Black Sea and establishing a thriving colony as hopelessly fanciful – and some historians have done just that. But study the sources in detail and evidence emerges that might support the narrative of the *Chronicon* and *Játvarðar saga*.

First of all, it's interesting to note that the time it took the English to reach their destination on the Black Sea – and the direction in which they sailed to get there – matches the apparent length of the sea-journey from Constantinople to the Crimean peninsula as recorded in early sources. What's more, there is also evidence that the Byzantine empire did indeed reassert its

Franciscan friars who passed through the Black Sea region in the 1240s claimed that Christian "Saxi" had fought off the might of the Tartars

authority in this area around 1100, as the *Chronicon* and *Játvarðar saga* imply.

Further evidence that tales of a medieval 'Nova Anglia' might be grounded in history is provided by five place-names that appeared in coastal charts of the north and north-eastern Black Sea dating to the 14th–16th centuries. The British historian Jonathan Shepard has shown that three of these seem to refer to Varangian settlements in this area (including a "Varangolimen" on the Crimean peninsula). The other two are even more suggestive: there's "Londina", which is, of course, strikingly similar to the English capital; and "Susaco", which may have been named in honour of Sussex, the land of the 'South Saxons'.

And if accounts of an English settlement on the Black Sea settlement were indeed works of fiction, then how to explain the claim – made by Franciscan friars who passed by the region in 1246–47 – that Christian "Saxi" had successfully defended themselves against the might of the Tartars. "When we were there we were told that the Tartars besieged a certain city of these Saxi and tried to subdue it," reported the friars. "The inhabitants however made engines to match those of the Tartars, all of which they broke, and the Tartars were not able to get near the city to fight owing to these engines and missiles."

While this English settlement was apparently thriving on the banks of the Black Sea, English Varangian Guards continued to protect the emperor in Constantinople – and would do so until at least the siege of Constantinople in 1204 (when a crusader army sacked the city). It's been suggested that the ranks of the Varangian Guard were replenished by men from the colony of 'Nova Anglia' over successive generations.

Quite how long this colony lasted is unclear. But as late as the mid-14th century, the *De Officiis* of Pseudo-Kodinus related that the Varangians still constituted a separate people. More intriguingly, the *De Officiis* records that, at Christmas, these Varangians wished the emperor length of life – and that, almost 300 years after their ancestors set off on their extraordinary voyage into the unknown, they did so "in their native tongue, that is, English"! **H**

Caitlin Green is a historian specialising in archaeology, place-names and the literature of late Roman and early medieval Britain. You can read more about the medieval 'New England' on her website, caitlingreen.org

Q&A

A selection of historical **conundrums** answered by experts

What are some of the strangest Christmas traditions that have now gone out of fashion?

▶▶▶ Festive traditions have always been changing. Even within living memory, we've seen some begin to disappear: carol singers no longer come to most people's doors, and telling ghost stories on Christmas Eve is no longer a big deal. Meanwhile, festive jumpers, which never used to be 'a thing', are now *de rigueur*.

But go a little further back in time and you find a vast number of practices, beliefs and games that are now extinct. Here are just a few...

Many Christmas celebrations involved upending the social hierarchy. Medieval churches and cathedrals elected 'boy bishops' and celebrated a Feast of Fools, in which a 'Lord of Misrule' or 'Abbot of Unreason' was appointed to supervise the revelry. This mischievous form of merry-making was banned in England and Scotland after the Reformation.

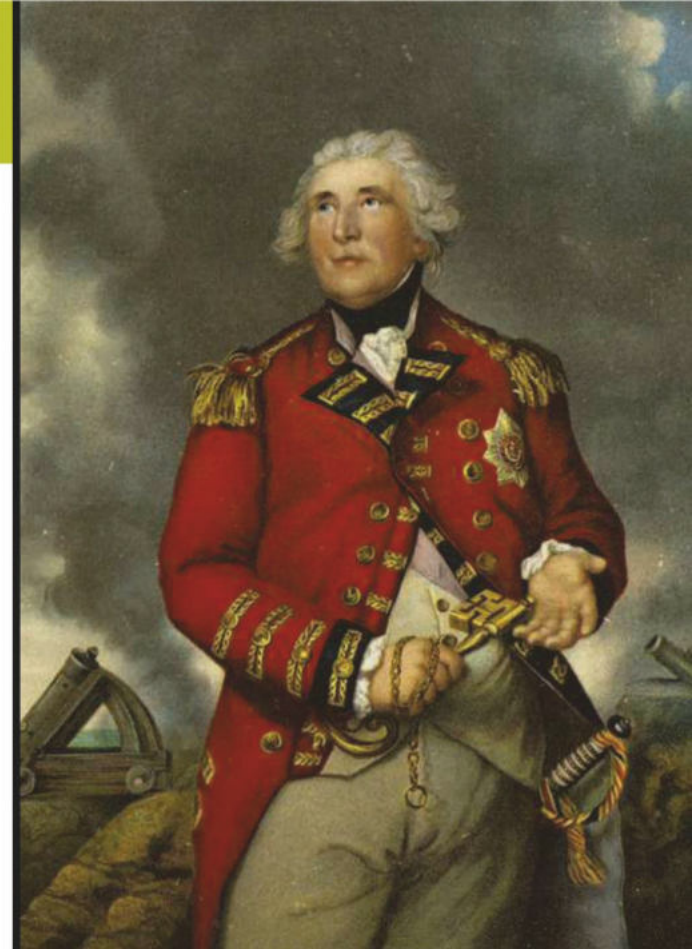
Another archaic belief was that burning the biggest log the hearth could accommodate would turn the dark night of winter as bright as day. In the north of England, people would put a fragment of this 'yule log' under their beds to protect the house from fire and lightning for the rest of the year, and it

might be used to light the following year's log. You could also throw a piece of it into the fire to quell a storm outside. This was a favoured practice in some Yorkshire coastal towns – perhaps to help fishermen out at sea.

Some of these lost traditions now seem bizarre to say the least. In the 1600s, young men and women would throw food at the wall during Christmas dinner to see if the grub that stuck spelled the name of their future spouse. In Wales, the tradition of holly-beating, or 'holming', saw young men and boys hitting the bare arms of young women with holly branches until they drew blood. In some parts of the country, it was similarly the custom to beat the last person to get out of bed on Boxing Day.

In fact, even the name of Boxing Day comes from a tradition that is no longer practised. Traditionally, 26 December was the day on which delivery boys, tradesmen, tenants and servants collected their 'Christmas boxes' of money, food or other goodies.

.....
Eugene Byrne, author and journalist



Siege defender General Eliott holds the key of Gibraltar in a 1787 portrait by Joshua Reynolds

What was the longest siege in British history?

▶▶▶ During the Wars of the Roses, Harlech Castle in Wales held out for the Lancastrians for seven long years after their defeat at Towton in 1461.

However, I would argue that the longest *continuous* siege in British history was the three-and-a-half-year siege of Gibraltar by the French and Spanish during the American War of Independence.

This began in earnest in September 1779. The British garrison under George Augustus Eliott, stationed on Gibraltar, was subjected to continuous bombardment and a tight blockade, and although the Royal Navy succeeded in bringing in provisions on three occasions, food supplies ran dangerously low. Indeed, Eliott is reported to have ordered his men to cease powdering their hair to conserve flour. The turning point came in September 1782, when French and Spanish floating gun batteries anchored in the sea off Gibraltar were destroyed by 'red-hot shot' (heated cannonballs) fired by Eliott's own guns. The siege was finally lifted in February 1783, when peace was agreed with Spain.

.....
Julian Humphrys, author and journalist

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ILLUSTRATION BY GLEN MCBETH

DID YOU KNOW...?

Branching out

Every Christmas, York Minster used to hold a 'Mistletoe Service', which all the city's assorted evildoers were invited to attend. Because of pagan associations, mistletoe was banned from display in the medieval church, but the Minster ignored this. The priest held up a mistletoe branch and declared that "all sorts of wicked and inferior people" could now gain "pardon and freedom". The Mistletoe Service is no longer held, but a sprig of the plant is still placed on the high altar each Christmas.



Lads on tour

In Icelandic folklore, 13 'Yule Lads' are believed to visit children in the days running up to Christmas and deposit small presents in wooden shoes left out on windowsills. If a child has been naughty, they place only a potato in their shoe. First recorded in a 17th-century poem, the Yule Lads are pranksters with names like 'Sausage-Swiper', who hides in house rafters and steals sausages that are being smoked, and 'Pot-Scraper', who makes off with the leftovers from food pots.

Jupiter rising

The first poem to be published by an African-American writer was composed on Christmas Day. Jupiter Hammon was a Christian slave owned by a family from Long Island, New York, who was given a basic education so that he could work as a book-keeper in their business. His literacy also led him to poetry, and he wrote *An Evening Thought: Salvation by Christ, With Penitential Cries* on 25 December 1760. The poem appeared as a one-page broadside early the following year. **H**

Nick Rennison, author and journalist



Piratical activities? Francis Drake's *Golden Hind* exchanges fire with a Spanish treasure ship in 1579

What led people to become pirates?

For early modern Britons, piracy was rarely a career choice. Captain Henry Mainwaring was a pirate turned pirate-catcher, who in 1618 wrote *Discourse of Pirates*, a treatise on how to deal with the problem, for James VI and I. He believed that many sailors were driven to piracy due to hunger and lack of regular work. Certainly, the end of the Anglo-Spanish War in 1604 meant that many crews were discharged from service, and unemployment, deprivation and piracy subsequently soared. Mainwaring argued that the best solution to the problem would be if coastal towns provided regular work and pay for sailors.

Even at the other end of the social scale, turning pirate was often motivated by financial necessity. Take the case of aristocrat Sir Francis Verney. After failing to reclaim full control of his inheritance from his stepmother in a case heard by parliament in 1606, Verney was facing overwhelming debt.

He decided to seek a life of adventure as a mercenary in Morocco and pirate on the Barbary Coast. Verney also converted to Islam, which caused even more consternation among his family, since apostasy was seen as the final abdication of national identity.

Of course, what counted as 'piracy' and who counted as a 'pirate' were not straightforward issues, since the dividing line between illicit and state-sanctioned seaborne violence was not always clear. Francis Drake's attacks on Spanish New World colonies and shipping on his circumnavigation of 1577–80 were piratical, since the two countries were not at war, and yet Elizabeth I knighted him on his return to England, and shared in the immense treasure.

The cases all unite, however, in their one key motivating factor: money.

.....
Claire Jowitt, author of *The Culture of Piracy, 1580–1630: English Literature and Seaborne Crime* (Routledge)



KING OF THE WORLD

Solar system

The Persian ambassador bows before Louis XIV in the Palace of Versailles, February 1715. By the time the Sun King died later that year, the tentacles of French power stretched across the globe

Using a combination of warfare, trade and diplomacy, Louis XIV – the Sun King – sought to expand both his own power and French influence in the wider world. He was, argues **Philip Mansel**, a truly global monarch with global ambitions



If there is one day that illustrates how Louis XIV influenced the world far beyond the borders of France, it is 16 November 1700. That day, at 11am, the doors of the Grand Cabinet du Roi, or council chamber, at Versailles, opened to reveal Louis and his 17-year-old grandson, Philippe, duc d'Anjou. Silence fell in the room.

Aged 62 and at the absolute zenith of his power, Louis had an announcement to make. "Messieurs, here is the king of Spain," he said of Philippe. "His birth called him to this crown, the late king also by his will. The whole nation desired it and begged me for it pressingly. It was the decree of heaven. I have accorded it with pleasure."

Turning to his grandson, he added: "Be a good Spaniard; it is now your first duty; but remember that you were born French; in order to maintain the union between the two nations. It is the way to keep them happy and to maintain the peace of Europe."

Next, Louis addressed the Spanish ambassador: "Monsieur, salute your king." In tears, the ambassador knelt to kiss the hands and feet of his new monarch, Philip V, and exclaimed: "What joy! There are no more Pyrenees, they are destroyed and henceforth we are one."

You can read this as diplomatic posturing of the highest order. You can note that Philip, through his grandfather Louis' first wife, the Infanta Maria Teresa, had the strongest hereditary claim to the Spanish throne. Nevertheless, it is still a remarkable thing for the ambassador to have said, evidence that Louis was a man who bestrode the world stage – a truly global monarch.

Louis was forever seeking openings on the world stage. It's telling that his hero was Alexander the Great

Paradoxically, Louis is best remembered today for his domestic achievements. He earned his place among the pantheon of French monarchs through his actions on the home front – ruthlessly consolidating his control of an increasingly centralised France; weakening the influence of the Paris *parlement* and the military might of great nobles to give himself a secure power base.

And he was a master at projecting that power – most notably through the enormous palace of Versailles, which he completed between 1666 and 1688. Versailles was a showpiece for French luxury products. It was also a government and military headquarters, where the king constantly drilled and reviewed his troops; and a park, museum and art gallery designed to attract and impress French and foreign visitors. In short, the world came to Versailles.

But Louis also went out to the world. This autocrat who dominated domestic affairs for seven decades was forever hunting for opportunities to increase French power and influence on a global scale. It's telling that his hero was Alexander the Great, a man who

built an empire that extended from Egypt to India.

Where Alexander led from the front, Louis lived in more complicated times. While he saw victory on the battlefield as a way to enhance his personal status (France fought three major wars – the Franco-Dutch War, the Nine Years' War and the War of the Spanish Succession – during his long reign), he also understood the importance of trade and dynastic politics as ways to extend his influence.

To strengthen his position in Europe, Louis maintained a French alliance with Sweden; repeatedly tried to make a French prince king of Poland; supported Hungarian rebels in their struggle to free themselves from Austrian rule; allied himself with the Ottoman empire (the supreme power in the Balkans and the Middle East) and the elector of Bavaria against Austria; and he financed Jacobite attempts to free Ireland and Scotland from English control.

A game of monopolies

Louis' alliances with Spain and the Ottoman empire were rooted in his desire to make France a global economic power. In 1701, the year after his grandson became king of Spain, French companies won the monopoly to supply Spanish colonies in South America with African slaves. "This commerce is very advantageous," wrote the French ambassador in Spain in 1701, the Marquis d'Harcourt.

To help French global trade, Louis also founded overseas trading companies such as the Compagnie des Indes, in 1664, and forced French princes and nobles to invest in them.

Louis improved existing French ports

From musketeers to Macron: 10 remarkable facts about the Sun King

1 When Louis was born in 1638, he was compared to the infant Jesus. His tutor Cardinal Mazarin wrote that God had given him "all the qualities" to become the greatest king the world had ever seen.



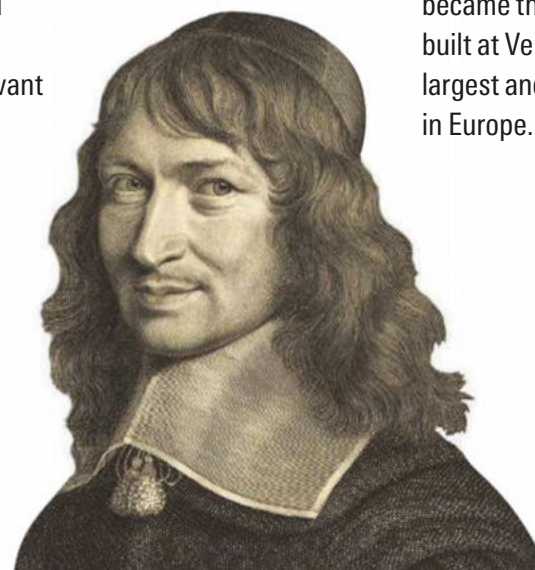
A portrait of Louis as a baby, when he was compared to Jesus

2 Louis witnessed five years of rebellion during his reign, from 1648–53. At one point, Parisian dissidents invaded his palace to check he was in bed, and not about to escape. Two of his predecessors, Henri III, and his grandfather Henri IV, had been murdered, in 1589 and 1610 respectively.

3 Louis went on campaign in northern or eastern France every summer in wartime. Some of the 80 frontier fortresses he built were still being used during the Second World War.

4 Louis had his finance minister Nicolas Fouquet arrested by musketeers under D'Artagnan (the hero of *The Three Musketeers*). Fouquet spent around a decade in solitary confinement. The servant he was allowed, Eustache Dauger, wore a mask – the original man in the iron mask, who has inspired numerous novels and films.

Nicolas Fouquet spent 10 years in solitary confinement on Louis' orders



5 From 1671 to his death in 1715, Louis never slept in Paris. No other king has shunned his capital so completely. His main residence became the palace he built at Versailles, the largest and most luxurious in Europe.



Money-spinning operation Slaves work on a sugar plantation on what is thought to be the French colony of Saint Domingue (present-day Haiti) in the 18th century. Such enterprises generated enormous wealth for Louis' France, funding grandiose buildings that can still be seen across the country today

such as Marseille on the Mediterranean and Dunkirk on the North Sea. Despite its distance from Paris, he visited Dunkirk six times. It became a base for French privateers to raid British shipping and for French expeditions to support Jacobite risings in the British Isles. He also expanded the French navy into a formidable force of more than 200 ships. (The English, however, laughed at the gilded crowns and Ls and sea nymphs trumpeting the Sun King's glory, which were carved on his grandest ships and made them easy targets for destruction.)

France founded trading colonies in India, at Surat and Pondichéry; and in the Caribbean, in the island of Saint Domingue (present-day Haiti). Profitable French sugar and coffee plantations, run by slave labour, helped pay for the grandiose 18th-century buildings that can be seen today in Nantes and Bordeaux. Meanwhile, Louisiana – named after the Sun King – in theory included the entire valley of the Mississippi, making it one of the largest land grabs in the history of European imperialism.

Versailles, portrayed in the recent TV

series of the same name as a place where Louis, psychologically at least, sometimes isolated himself, was a global power hub, equivalent to the White House today. The Escalier des Ambassadeurs or Ambassadors' Staircase, built between 1672 and 1679 and lined with pink and green marble, had frescoes showing the nations of the four continents (Asians, Africans, Americans and Europeans) admiring a bust of the king as a Roman emperor. In keeping with the message of the staircase, conversation at Versailles was about Aleppo, Siam and

6 More than 150,000 Protestants fled France following Louis' revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which had given Protestants the right to worship. In doing so France impoverished itself and enriched its rivals. Helped by an influx of French Protestants, London became larger than Paris.

7 Louis inadvertently helped his great enemy William of Orange invade England in 1688. By launching an invasion of the Holy Roman Empire across the Rhine, the French king left the coast clear for William to seize the English crown from Louis' ally James II and VII.



8 Following defeat to the British general the Duke of Marlborough in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–14), Louis' France was only saved by its forts, its resilience and a change of government in England.

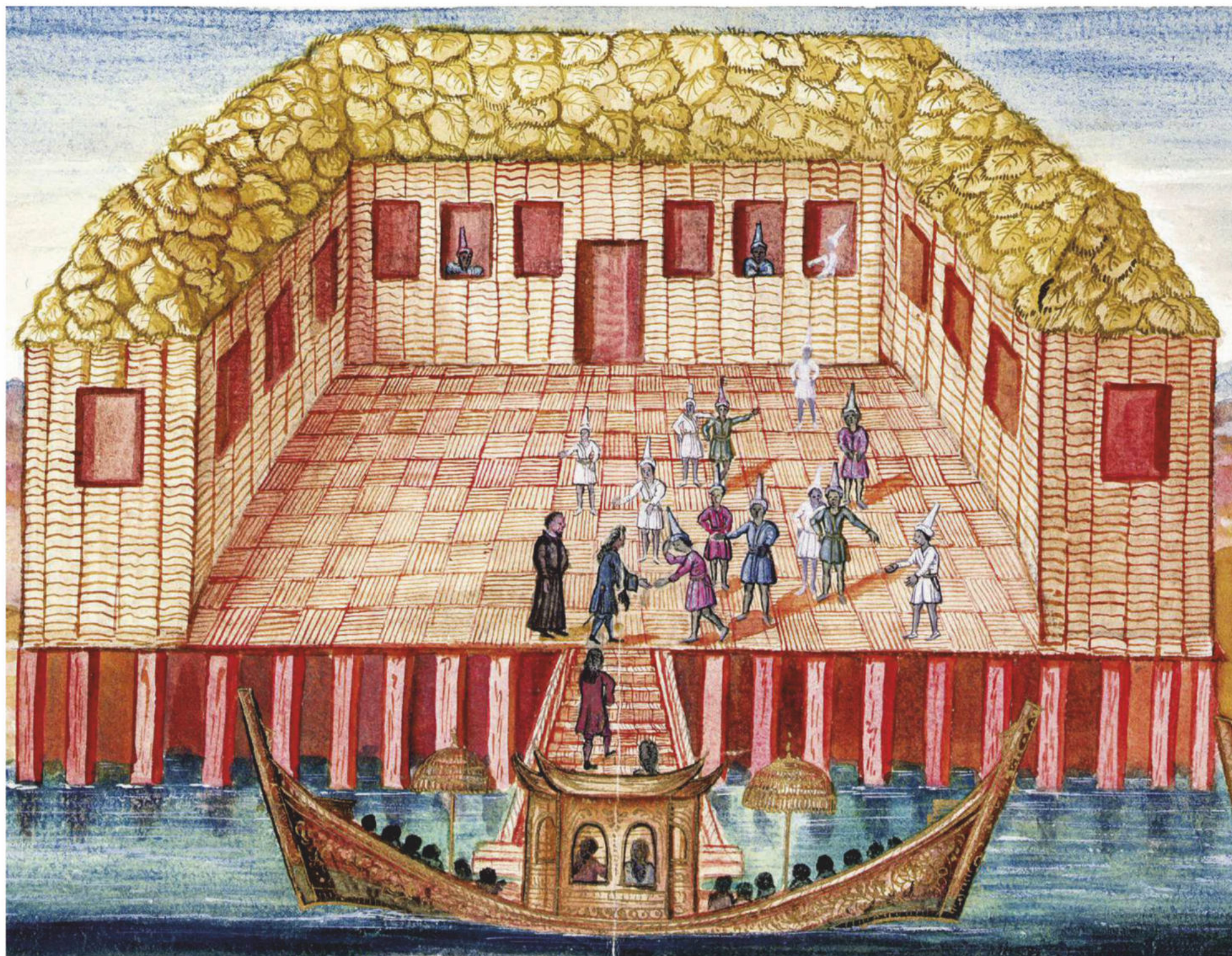
William of Orange seized England while Louis' attentions lay elsewhere

9 Louis had many mistresses and fathered more than 10 illegitimate children. After the death of his first wife in 1683, he married Madame de Maintenon in secret, for love. Together they founded the best girls' school of the age, at Saint-Cyr in 1686.

Madame de Maintenon, whom Louis married (in secret) for love



10 He was both loved and hated by his people. Watching Louis' funeral procession in 1715, some Parisians rejoiced and played music. Presidents of the Fifth Republic from De Gaulle to Macron, however, regard him as a role model.



French overreach Officials welcome French Jesuit ambassadors to Siam (now Thailand), as depicted in a 17th-century woodcut. Louis saw in Siam the opportunity for colonial expansion, yet relations between the two nations soured and, when Louis sent troops to the south-east Asian kingdom, they were ultimately expelled

China, as well as France and Europe.

Travellers, merchants and missionaries alike encouraged Louis XIV's dreams of a global empire. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, in his dedication to Louis XIV of his account of his travels across Asia in search of jewels (for which Louis XIV was his best customer), wrote: "It seems to me that all the kings of Asia and Africa will one day be your tributaries and that you are destined to command the entire universe." The dedication of a description of the kingdom of Siam (as Thailand was then called) by the Jesuit missionary Guy Tachard assured the king that: "Posterity will count among the conquests of Louis le Grand the kings of Siam and China, submitted to the cross of Jesus Christ."

On 1 September 1686, ambassadors from Phra Narai, the king of Siam, climbed the Escalier des Ambassadeurs at Versailles "to the sound of drums and trumpets". As they advanced in the most luxurious

room in the palace, the mirror-lined Galerie des Glaces, packed with curious courtiers, they repeatedly prostrated themselves – kowtowed – almost to the floor. After gazing at Louis for several minutes, one made a speech in Siamese, praising "the very great

king who had conquered all his enemies".

In 1688, the king sent a thousand troops to Siam. Phra Narai hoped to use them in order to control his kingdom. Louis XIV advised him to convert to Catholicism as it was the religion most likely to instil obedience in his subjects. But Louis XIV's troops overreached themselves by trying to take over Bangkok. There was a revolt. Phra Narai died in prison. French bibles and portraits of Louis XIV were burned, French troops expelled. An Asian power had defeated a European empire. For the next 180 years Siam would remain largely closed in terms of interactions with Europe.

Chinese embassy

Louis XIV's relations with China were more successful. On 15 September 1684, the year that he received the first embassy from Siam, Louis XIV also received in Versailles a Flemish Jesuit, Philippe Couplet, who was accompanied by a Chinese convert wearing a green silk tunic with a blue brocade vest,

Expensive tastes

The Chinese convert to Christianity Michael Shen Fuzong was presented to Louis at Versailles, where he ate with chopsticks on a golden plate





World player A portrait of Louis XIV in 1701. During his 72-year reign, France founded colonies in India, North America and the Caribbean, and traded knowledge – and armaments – with China

Michael Shen Fuzong. Couplet presented the king with Chinese books and a request for more missionaries.

The royals watched Shen Fuzong eating with chopsticks on a golden plate especially brought for him. Shen Fuzong and Couplet then visited the gardens of Versailles, where the fountains were turned on in their honour. Couplet's first European translation of the works of Confucius – *Confucius, Philosopher of the Chinese*, which was in Latin – was published in Paris and dedicated to Louis.

True to his global ambitions, Louis XIV personally financed the dispatch of six French Jesuits, mathematics teachers, to the Chinese court. They left Brest on the Brittany coast in March 1685 with a stock of mathematical and astronomical instruments, arriving in China in July 1687 and in Peking (now Beijing) in February 1688. They captivated – and were captivated by – the Manchu ruler of China, the Kangxi emperor, teaching him mathematics and astronomy, drawing him celestial and terrestrial maps and

translating French books on mathematics and medicine into Chinese. In 1692 an Edict of Toleration confirmed permission for them to preach Christianity and to make converts.

Another landmark moment in Sino-French relations arrived on 2 November 1698, when the first French boat to sail directly to China left La Rochelle. The ship returned to Lorient (a port founded by Louis XIV on the Brittany coast) on 1 August 1700 with a cargo of blue and white Chinese porcelain. Versailles had a taste for Chinese objects and Louis XIV's children were keen collectors. Soon more French priests were dispatched, bringing more knowledge of astronomy, cartography and mathematics – and French cannon for the emperor.

Under Louis XIV a dialogue between the French and Chinese courts – one monarchy speaking to the other across 5,000 miles – had been established, 100 years before the dispatch of the first British embassy to China in 1793. Both courts shared a taste for magnificence, hunting, literature, science

When Louis died, he was commemorated in memorial services across the world, from Mexico City to Aleppo

– and obedience. More French missions were sent in 1699, 1700, 1702 and 1703. Portraits of the king and his family, and of Philip V, were displayed in the Jesuit mission in Peking “in order to reveal to the entire universe the magnificence of the court of France”.

Louis XIV's interest in establishing French colonies in Asia, Africa and America and his campaign to spread Catholicism throughout the world – not to mention his relations with the Ottoman empire, Siam and China – show that, like his great-great-grandfather Philip II of Spain, he was a truly global monarch. Indeed, the last embassy he received in the Galerie des Glaces of Versailles, in February 1715, came from Persia to sign a commercial treaty with France and request naval help against Arab rulers in the Gulf. When Louis XIV died on 1 September 1715, he was commemorated in memorial services across the world, from Mexico City to Aleppo, as well as in France and in his grandson's kingdom of Spain.

This idea of France being an outward-looking, international player has endured up to the present Fifth Republic era. In the past half century, the nation has increasingly come to resemble a kind of republican monarchy, perhaps in part because General de Gaulle was such an ardent admirer of Louis. French leaders may no longer dream of global conquest, but Louis XIV's sense of – to use President Macron's description – “Jupiterian” grandeur persists to this day. **H**

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Philip Mansel is a historian, and the author of numerous books about the history of France and the Ottoman empire. His latest book, *King of the World: The Life of Louis XIV*, was published by Allen Lane in July

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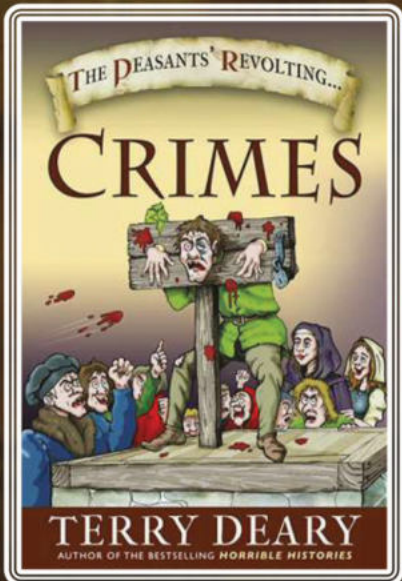
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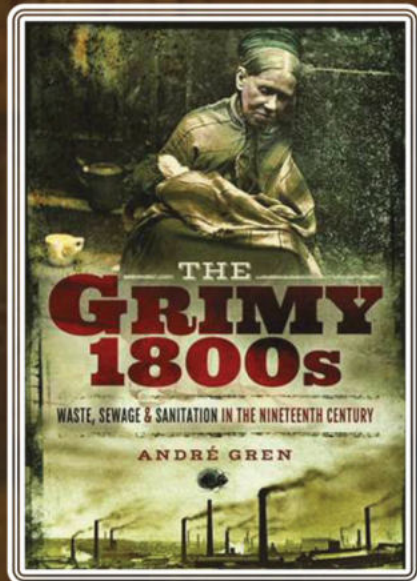
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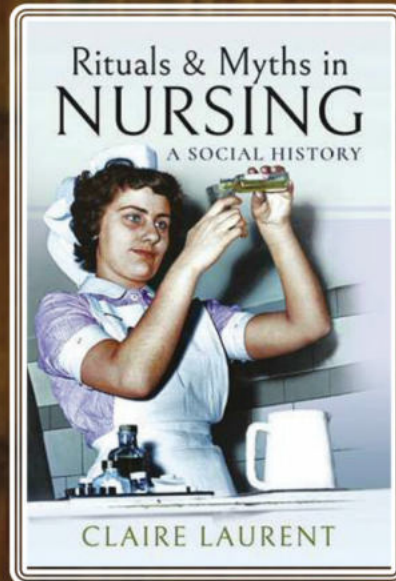
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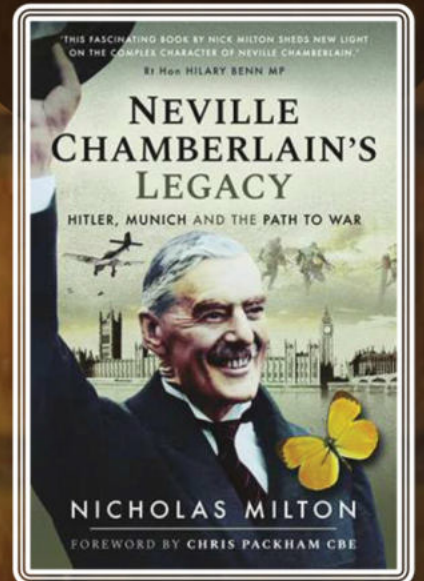
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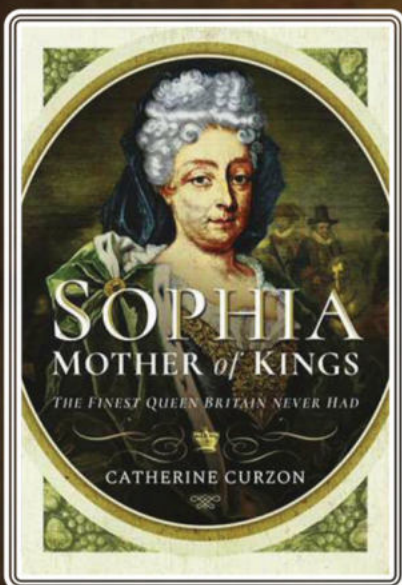
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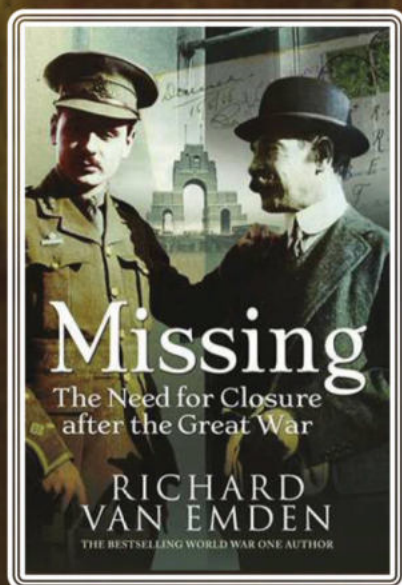
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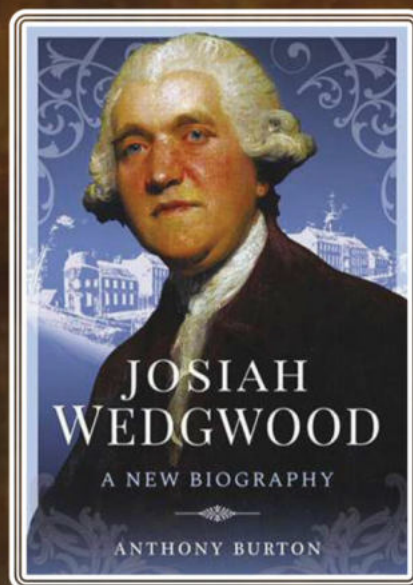
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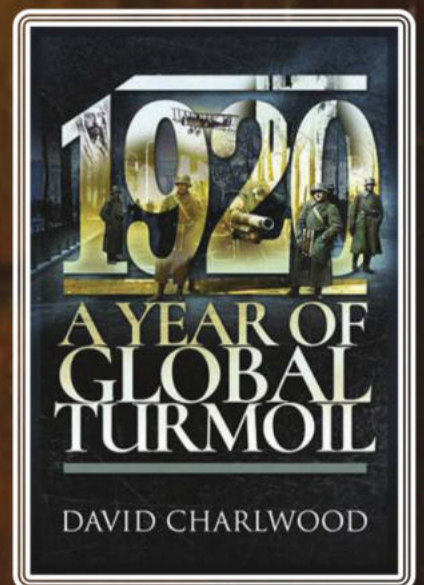
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An unexpected history of Christmas

The season of peace and goodwill? Not quite. Historically, Christmas has actually been a time of evil spirits, subversive snowmen and killer frogs. **James Daybell** and **Sam Willis** shine a different light on the festive period

★ Yuletide spite

The custom of friends and family exchanging cards during the festive season was a Victorian invention, with the first commercial card produced in 1843 by Henry Cole. From the 1870s onwards, the introduction of the half-penny stamp made postage more affordable, which boosted the popularity of sending cards. Many examples of 19th-century greetings cards survive in collections of scrapbooks held in libraries around the country.

Among the cheerful Yuletide messages – many of which were distinctly secular – a number strike a more sinister, spiteful note. Examples include an image of a dead robin, a child boiled in a teapot, a clown sneaking up on a policeman to assault him, and sinister-looking snowmen. And finally, of course, nothing quite says happy Christmas like a depiction of a frog murdering a fellow frog with a dagger to the soft underbelly and then running off with the dead frog's money. And the message? "May you have a Merry Christmas, unlike this unfortunate amphibian."

★ Obscenity and subversion

Christmas was a time for subversion during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance period, when snowmen were regularly built as winter effigies. During the cold winter of 1510–11, the citizens of Brussels built around 110 individual snowmen. Some of these

A c1880 Christmas card shows a frog committing murder before making off with its victim's money



depicted folklore figures such as unicorns and mermaids, and others explored religious and political themes. Meanwhile, some used extreme sexual and scatological imagery. One of the more sexualised sculptures could be found in Rozendal, the city's red light district. It depicted a naked prostitute and a "dog... ensconced between her legs".

Of the more scatological was a snow-cow that delivered "turds, farts and stinking". There was also a defecating centaur; a "manneken pis" fountain depicting a small boy urinating into the mouth of a drinker; and a drunk drowning in his own excrement. Jolly Frosty the snowman, it seems, has vulgar ancestors.

★ Hard luck stories

In the past, Christmas was a time full of superstition and thought to be fraught with bad luck. The robin, for example, is viewed today by most as a charming symbol of wintertime, and one that adorns many a festive card. Yet in Gloucestershire in the 1950s, there is evidence that some greeted the receipt of such cards with horror. This stemmed from the widespread belief that a wild bird entering the house signified an impending death in the family.

Likewise, if holly was brought into the house at any time of year – with the exception of Christmas – it was seen as



Saint Nicholas, the half-demon Krampus, and shoes packed with festive treats, sit on a Christmas table, in an 1896 painting

a harbinger of death, and even in the Christmas period was either burned or ceremonially disposed of once the festive period was over. In the early 19th century, it was bad luck for fire to leave the house on Christmas day, which meant that, in a time before commercial ‘lucifer’ matches, neighbours would not share light from their fires to ignite wood or candles. To ask a neighbour for a light was a gross insult.

★ Evil beings

Romantic accounts of Saint Nicholas descending chimneys to deposit presents in stockings – stories that first flourished in the US during the 19th century – stem from earlier traditions connected to evil spirits. The chimney throughout European folklore was associated with the supernatural and as an entry point into the home, whether for good or evil. In Greece and Serbia, for example, *Kallikantzaro*i or Christmas goblins, were believed to live underground for most of the year, surfacing during the 12 days of Christmas to slip down chimneys in order to wreak havoc.

A way of preventing these evil beings from descending your chimney was to light a Yule log over the festive season. A further precaution was to throw a pair of foul-smelling shoes onto the flames.

★ Magical shoe fillers

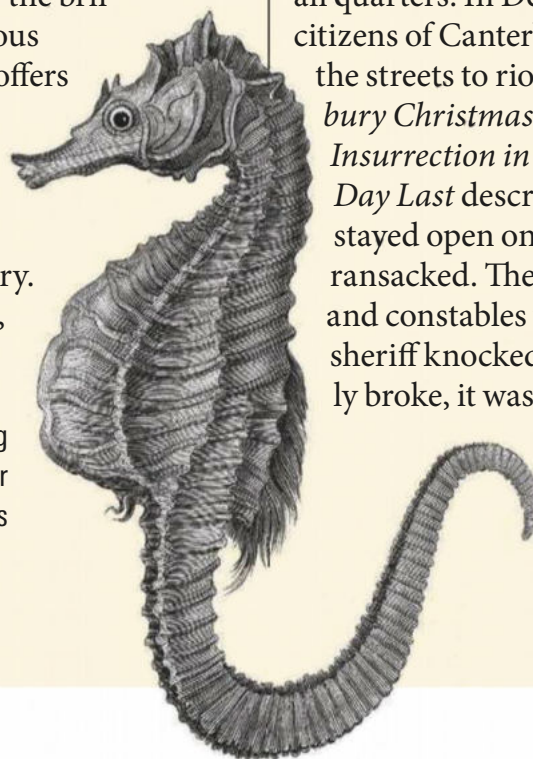
Shoes were not simply a noxious deterrent for evil sprites, but also a precursor to the

now customary stockings as receptacles for Yuletide gifts. Earlier depictions of Saint Nicholas associate him with dropping gold coins down the chimney. In 16th-century Holland, this led to the tradition of children placing their shoes on the hearth on the eve of the feast of Saint Nicholas, and awaking in the morning to find them filled with gifts and sweets. In Italian folklore, an old woman named Befana (the ‘Christmas witch’) delivered gifts to children on the eve of epiphany (6 January), slipping them into shoes left by the fireplace. These earlier chimney-related traditions no doubt passed into usage in the US via migration.

★ Animal cruelty

In recent years animal charities have highlighted how the festive season can be miserable for animals – and festive animal cruelty has a long history. In *A Child’s Christmas in Wales* (1954) the brilliant poet (and cantankerous inebriate) Dylan Thomas offers a semi-fictional, autobiographical account of a young boy’s experience of Christmas during the first half of the 20th century. It was a time of year when,

Christmas cheer has long been in short supply for China’s seahorses



They believed that, during the 12 days of Christmas, goblins slipped down chimneys in order to wreak havoc

according to Thomas, it “was always snowing”. One passage describes two boys waiting in the snow “hands wrapped in socks” and armed with snowballs to attack the local cats. The wanton mischievousness of these boys, sketched in a moment of poetic genius as “Eskimo-footed arctic marksmen”, opens a door into a well-documented history of mistreatment of cats.

Cats are not the only animals to find Christmas miserable. Another species that has had a rough time of it at Christmas is the seahorse. An endangered species but favoured as a remedy in traditional Chinese medicine (it is said to cure a flagging libido), for more than a century seahorses have also been caught and sold for their popularity as Christmas decorations.

★ Eruptions of violence

Christmas has often been as much about violence and rioting as it has about sharing and caring. It is well known that Oliver Cromwell and the puritans sought to abolish Christmas, which they viewed as a “popish superstition”. One parliamentary ordinance in June 1647 threatened with punishment anyone who celebrated this festival. This ban did not go down well in all quarters. In December 1647 many of the citizens of Canterbury defied it, taking to the streets to riot. The pamphlet *Canterbury Christmas: Or a True Relation of the Insurrection in Canterbury on Christmas Day Last* describes how shops that stayed open on this holy day were ransacked. The city’s mayor, aldermen and constables were attacked, and the sheriff knocked down, his head “fearfully broke, it was gods mercy his brains were not beat out”.

In America in 1776, early in the American Revolutionary War, the

rebel militia guarding the maritime route to Fort Ticonderoga, New York state, was a simmering pot of class and cultural rivalry, a situation exacerbated by cold and boredom in the winter darkness. Extra alcohol on Christmas day saw an eruption of violence as soldiers turned on each other like hungry dogs. A recently discovered personal account noted how Pennsylvania soldiers “armed with guns, bayonets and swords, by force entered the tents and huts of [Massachusetts] officers and soldiers, dragging many out of doors naked and wounding them, robbing and plundering”.

★ Festive serendipity

Chimneys often contain artefacts that have been bricked in or lodged up the flue. Serendipity has left us with one of the most interesting types of documents to be discovered in chimneys: children’s letters to Father Christmas. For historians, they are a joy. “I want a baby doll and a waterproof with a hood and a pair of gloves and a toffee apple and a gold penny and a silver sixpence and a long toffee,” wrote the breathless Alfred and Hannah Howard in 1911 before placing the letter in the fire. The letter started to burn before being picked up by a draft and whisked to safety on a tiny shelf inside the chimney of the family home in Dublin. It was discovered by a couple renovating the house 81 years later. Such letters can be magical because they don’t just record a list of



This letter to Santa, penned by two young Dubliners in 1911, survived inside a fireplace for 81 years

material objects, but also a child’s hopes and fears, too.

★ Carrots with everything!

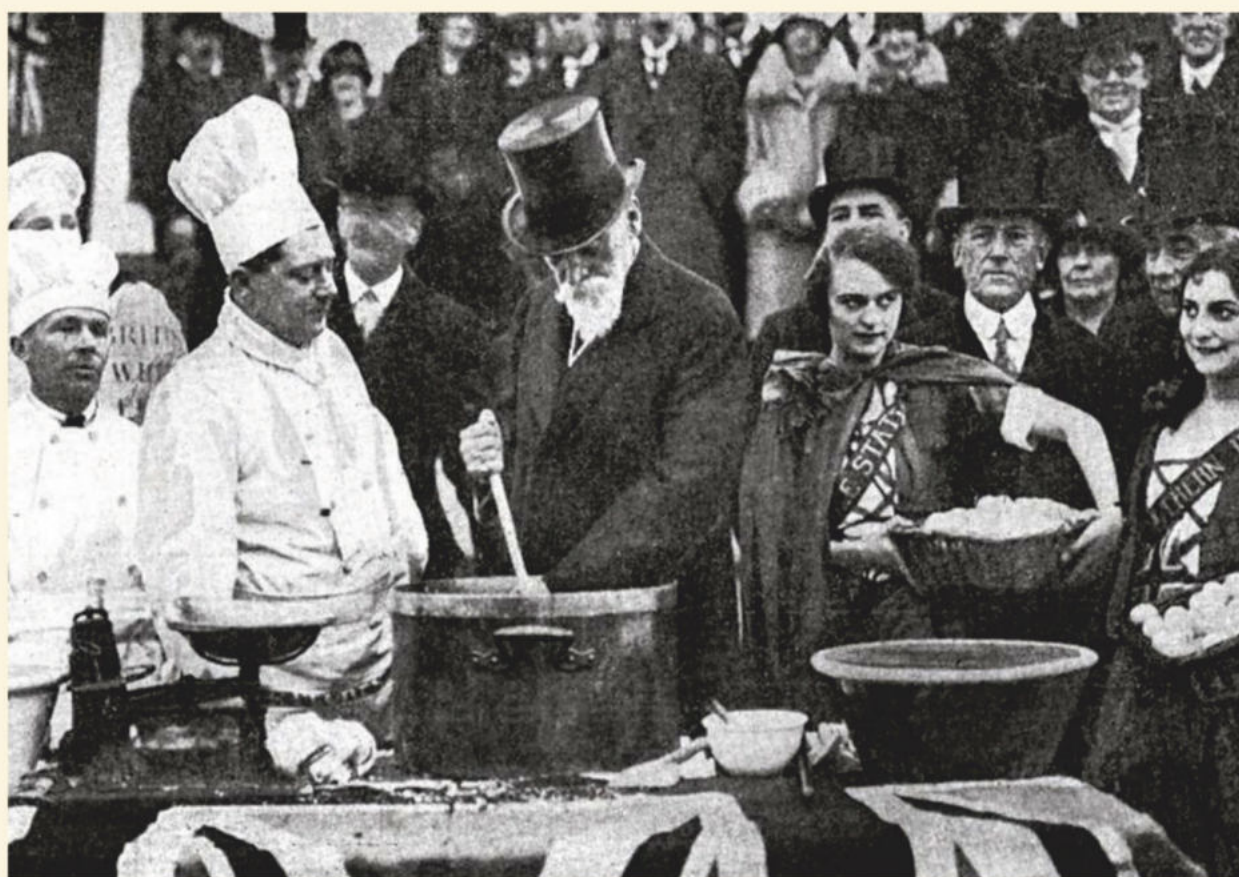
During the world wars, with rationing imposed and the supply lines of the British empire greatly reduced, luxury Christmas treats were a pipe dream. More humble ingredients had to be used. The carrot, in particular, was much lauded as a versatile and plentiful foodstuff, so much so that during the Second World War a recipe booklet was produced with instructions for thrifty carrot-based dishes, including

carrot soups, carrot savoury, carrot croquettes and the war-and-peace pudding.

An alternative to Christmas pudding – and first produced in Canada during the First World War – the war-and-peace pudding was made with carrots instead of mincemeat. It consisted of flour, bread-crumbs, suet, and grated raw potato and carrot to bulk out the mixed dried fruit and spice – and note the lack of fortified spirits. So popular was this that many never went back to eating a richer pudding.

★ The pudding of empire

A very different kind of Christmas pudding was enjoyed by George V and his family at Sandringham on Christmas Day in 1927. The pud was produced by none other than the royal chef, André Cédard, who used in his recipe ingredients from around the empire: currants from Australia, raisins from South Africa, minced apple from Canada, demerara sugar from the West Indies, ground cloves from Zanzibar and brandy from Cyprus. Lord Meath of the Royal Colonial Institute called it “a symbol of unity of empire” and desired that every household in the country should eat such a pudding as a way of supporting the trade of empire. **H**

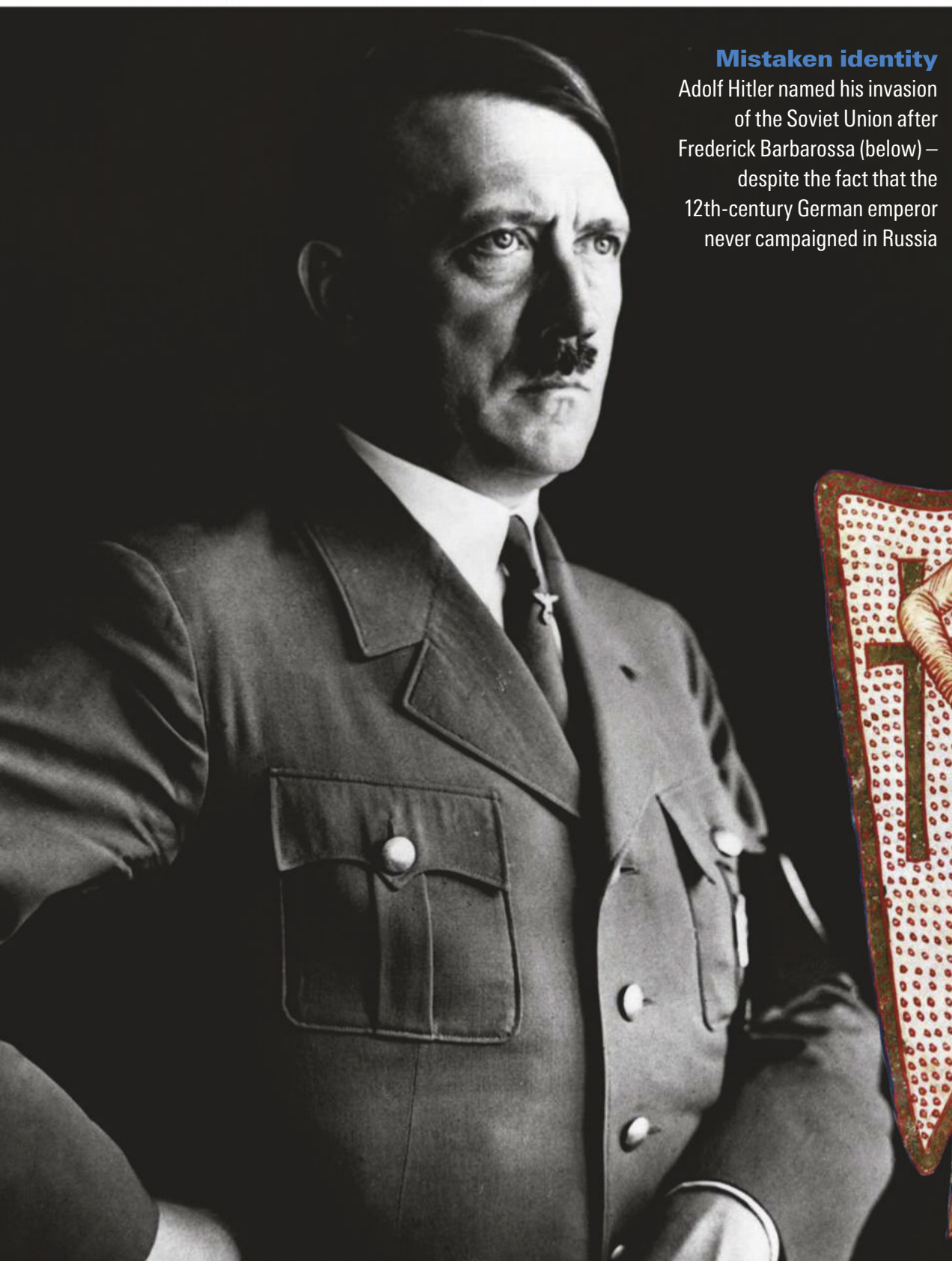


Lord Meath stirs ingredients for the Empire Christmas pudding, destined for the royal dinner table in 1927

James Daybell is professor of early modern British history at the University of Plymouth. Sam Willis is a historian, writer and broadcaster who specialises in maritime history. The duo are the authors and presenters of the *Histories of the Unexpected* books, podcast and live show

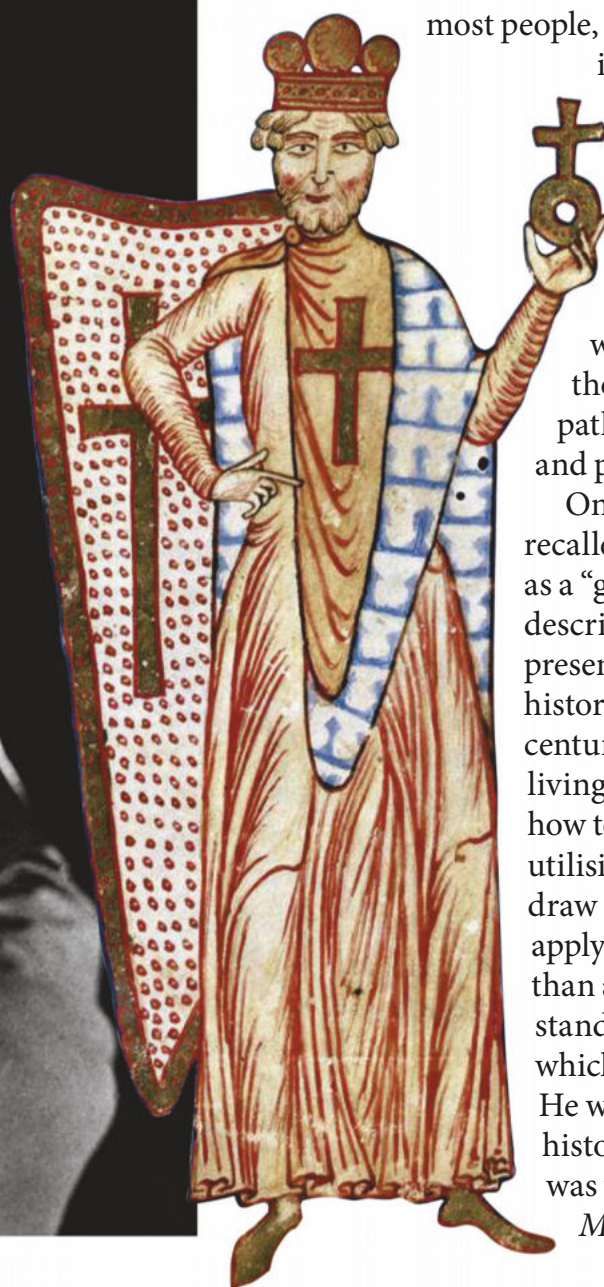
SENDING HISTORY

War leaders have always tried to learn the lessons of the past. But deploying history in conflict is a path strewn with pitfalls as well as opportunities, argues **Andrew Roberts**



Mistaken identity

Adolf Hitler named his invasion of the Soviet Union after Frederick Barbarossa (below) – despite the fact that the 12th-century German emperor never campaigned in Russia



Beside my desk is a letter from Aldous Huxley, written from Los Angeles in November 1959, which states: “That men do not learn very much from the lessons of history is the most important of the lessons that history has to teach us.” One group of people who do try to learn from history are war leaders, although they do not always learn the correct lessons. As politicians and statesmen, they tend to be more interested in history than most people, and they often see themselves in historical roles that they recognise have been played in the past. Like modern-day actors watching films and videos of people playing the same parts that they themselves are about to take on, war leaders try to learn from those who went before. It’s a path strewn with opportunities and pitfalls.

One well-known war leader recalled his school history teacher as a “grey-haired man whose fiery description made us forget the present and who evoked plain historical facts out of the fog of the centuries and turned them into living reality... He not only knew how to throw light on the past by utilising the present, but also how to draw conclusions from the past and apply them to the present. More than anyone else he showed understanding for all the daily problems which held us breathless at the time. He was the teacher who made history my favourite subject.” That was written by Adolf Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, and it illustrates

GETTY IMAGES

INTO BATTLE

how easy it has been for many people to learn the wrong lessons from history.

Hitler saw himself as a second Arminius – the leader of the Cherusci tribe and of a coalition that famously destroyed three Roman legions in the battle of the Teutoburg Forest in AD 9. But when he invaded Russia in 1941, the fuhrer ignored the blatant historical examples of both King Charles XII of Sweden and Napoleon Bonaparte in their disastrous invasions in the two previous centuries. The fact that Hitler codenamed his onslaught Operation Barbarossa after Emperor Frederick I (1122–90) was an indication that he saw the offensive in grand historical terms. The Holy Roman Emperor fought five campaigns in Italy and was a leader of the Third Crusade. Crucially, however, Frederick never campaigned in the endless wastes of Russia.

Once Operation Barbarossa had gone disastrously wrong, and the Soviet armies were advancing on Berlin from the east – while British and American armies crossed the Rhine in March 1945 – Hitler also tried to take solace by finding a reassuring historical precedent. With President Franklin Roosevelt dying, Hitler and his propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels, wondered whether it might be a recurrence of the moment in January 1762 when the death of Tsarina Elizabeth of Russia brought Tsar Peter III to the throne, who, as an admirer of Frederick the Great, split the anti-Prussian coalition. It was a wildly inappropriate parallel – the incoming president, Harry S Truman, fully supported continuing the Second World War – and a sign of just how desperate the fuhrer was for any glimmer of good news.

The commanders of ancient empires provide not just examples of great war leadership in themselves, but also inspiration

for almost all the great conquerors who came after them. It is impossible to consider the military and political career of Napoleon Bonaparte without appreciating how he consciously saw himself as a worthy modern successor to Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar; he proved as much in his exile on the South Atlantic island of St Helena, when he wrote a commentary on Caesar's military campaigns. It is likewise astounding how often battles like Cannae and Actium and leaders like Hannibal and Scipio crop up in the thought and conversation of the military leaders of the 19th and 20th centuries.

American heroes

Dwight D Eisenhower was fascinated by the battle of Cannae (Hannibal's great triumph over the Romans, in 216 BC), which is still taught in military academies today. His boss during the Second World War, the US army chief of staff, General George C Marshall, was also steeped in history. His heroes were the giants of the American Civil War. As a young cadet at the Virginia Military Institute (VMI), Marshall had seen Stonewall Jackson's widow attend commemoration services there.

The teaching at VMI, where Civil War cannonballs were embedded in some of the buildings, used historical parallels constantly, urging its pupils to emulate such generals as Robert E Lee and Jackson himself. The tactics of leaders from other eras, including George Washington and Napoleon, were also taught.

Napoleon's education was similarly steeped in both military



A form of flattery
Napoleon Bonaparte imitates toga-wearing Roman statesmen by placing his hand into his waistcoat. The French leader urged his men to study ancient generals such as Alexander the Great (left)

and political history, from which he constantly drew parallels with his own career throughout his life. Napoleon urged his junior officers to “read and re-read the campaigns of Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Julius Caesar, Gustavus Adolphus, Turenne, Prince Eugene and Frederick the Great. This is the only way to become a great captain.” Ancient history provided him with an encyclopaedia of military and political tactics and quotations that he would draw upon. This inspiration was so profound that, when posing for paintings, he would sometimes put his hand into his waistcoat in imitation of toga-wearing Romans.

While at his military academy, Brienne, Napoleon would borrow many biographies and history books from the school library, devouring Plutarch’s tales of heroism, patriotism and virtue. He also read Cornelius Nepos’ *Lives of the Great Captains*. One of his school nicknames – ‘the Spartan’ – might have been accorded him because of his pronounced admiration for that city-state rather than for any asceticism of character. In classes he naturally took the side of his hero Caesar against Pompey.

While his contemporaries played sports outside, Napoleon would read everything he could about the most ambitious leaders of the ancient world. For him, the desire to emulate Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar was thus neither as strange or as hubristic as it might seem today. His schooling left him with the ambition to stand alongside the giants of the past.

Those giants also extended into more recent history. Another hero of Napoleon’s was Charles XII of Sweden, who from 1700–06 had destroyed the armies of three states in coalition against him, but then marched deep into Russia, only to be catastrophically defeated, as Napoleon was to be in 1812.

Up for the fight

Charles de Gaulle, though a student of history, was curiously ambivalent about Napoleon, whom he thought a megalomaniac. (To which any Briton might add: It took one to know one.) De Gaulle drew more inspiration from French war leaders such as



Joan of Arc and Georges Clemenceau, earning Churchill’s jibe that de Gaulle thought of himself as Joan of Arc in trousers. De Gaulle’s inspiration to leave France in June 1940 and continue the struggle from London seems to have sprung from the example of Clemenceau, who, as French prime minister in November 1917, had said that his compatriots would not stop fighting even if Paris fell.

Charles de Gaulle’s father, uncle and grandfather were all historians, and he was thoroughly schooled in French patriotic history. He saw it as his mission to avenge France’s defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71, and another unfortunate period of recent history from which de Gaulle sadly drew unfortunate conclusions, the Fashoda Crisis. In 1898 Britain and France had a stand-off in the Sudan that could have resulted in war, before France humiliatingly backed down. The future General de Gaulle was only eight years old at the time of Fashoda, but his father, an ultra-nationalist minor aristocrat and history professor at a Jesuit college, took almost personal affront at



Founding father

General George C Marshall, US army chief of staff during the Second World War, was a cadet at the Virginia Military Institute, where he was encouraged to study the campaigns of generals such as George Washington (left)

France’s lost dignity, and drummed his anglophobia into his son.

Yet the war leader who was most profoundly steeped in history, largely because he was a historian himself, was Winston Churchill, author of a four-volume biography of his great ancestor, John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough (the architect of a brilliant victory over the French at Blenheim in 1704). During the Second World War, Churchill rightly saw himself acting on the same historical plane as both Marlborough, and his other great hero, Napoleon.

Churchill profoundly believed that both statesmen and even entire countries could and should learn the lessons of history. In April 1956, he said of the United States, which was not supporting Britain in her clash with Egypt over the Suez Canal, “They are a



Fighting spirit

In a radio broadcast from London, June 1940, Charles de Gaulle urges his compatriots to resist foreign occupation, as his hero, Joan of Arc (below), had done 500 years earlier



wise and experienced people. They learn from history. They know well that both the great wars which have darkened our lives and dishevelled the world could have been prevented if the United States had acted before they began to prevent them."

In the case of Suez, however, both Churchill and the then prime minister, Anthony Eden, took the wrong lessons from history, fallaciously equating Egypt's leader, Colonel Abdul Nasser, with Benito Mussolini. Over the Dardanelles expedition (a doomed attempt to knock Turkey out of the Great War in 1915), Churchill had also learned the wrong lesson – in this case from Admiral Sir John Duckworth's successful forcing of the Straits in 1807.

Stiffening the sinews

Much more often, however, history came spectacularly to Churchill's aid, particularly in the 1930s and during the Second World War when he mined it extensively for modern-day parallels. "It was not so much the triumph of distant deductive reasoning," thought Enoch Powell, "as the long vista of

**De Gaulle's father,
an ultra-nationalist
and history professor
at a Jesuit college,
drummed his anglophobia
into his son**

historical and personal memory which, when others were still blind, revealed to him the nature and inevitable outcome of the resurgent German empire. He was a man who thought with his memory." The historian Sir Jack Plumb agreed, arguing in a 1983 speech entitled 'The Dominion of History': "I think that it is extremely difficult for anyone not born into Churchill's world or time to realise what a dominance the past had over all of his thinking and action."

For Churchill did not just use history in his perorations like other politicians – to stiffen the sinews and summon up the blood. Instead he employed it in the body of his argument, for he truly believed that his generation had a duty to continue Britain's work, which he saw in the classically Whiggish way of being at the forefront of human progress.

A few months after the First World War broke out, in January 1915, Churchill exclaimed to the prime minister's wife, Margot Asquith: "My God! This, this is living history. Everything we are doing and saying is thrilling – it will be read by a thousand



Bonded by blood

Few war leaders have been more profoundly steeped in history than Winston Churchill, who drew inspiration from his ancestor – and one of Britain’s most celebrated generals – the Duke of Marlborough (left)

generations, think of that!” The war gave Churchill many opportunities for calling history in aid, as on 23 May 1916 when he said in a speech in support of compulsory conscription: “If the Germans are to be beaten decisively, they will be beaten like Napoleon was beaten and like the Confederates were beaten – that is to say, by being opposed by superior numbers along fronts so extensive that they cannot maintain them or replace the losses incurred along them.” It took more than two years of slaughter before his analogy was proved correct.

A united front

Once he had finished *Marlborough* in 1938, Churchill started work on another history book, his four-volume *History of the English-Speaking Peoples*. He was not writing these books merely for the pleasure of academic research; it was always with the motive that history would be, as he put it, “helpful as a guide in present difficulties”.

And in no conflict would those difficulties appear more overwhelming than the Second World War. In a radio broadcast on 10 May 1942, Churchill was quick to use history to tease Adolf Hitler about his army’s reverses in the Soviet Union. “There is a winter, you know, in Russia,” he joked. “For a good many months the temperature is apt to fall very low. There is snow, there is frost, and all that. Hitler forgot about this Russian winter. He

Winston Churchill did not just send the English language into battle, he sent English history into battle too

must have been very loosely educated. We all heard about it at school; but he forgot it. I have never made such a bad mistake as that.”

Eighteen months earlier, as the Battle of Britain reached its height on 11 September 1940, Churchill had told the world: “We must regard the next week or so as a very important period in our history. It ranks with the days when the Spanish Armada was approaching the Channel, and Drake was finishing his game of bowls; or when Nelson stood between us and Napoleon’s Grand Army at Boulogne. We have read all about this in the history books, but what is happening now is on a far greater scale and of far more consequence to the life and future of the world and its civilisation than these brave old days of the past.” The Canadian diplomat

Charles Ritchie wrote in his diary of the effect of that speech on Britons: “He makes them feel they are living their history.”

A recent article in a Polish historical journal has estimated that as many as 10 per cent of Churchill’s most important wartime speeches of 1940 and 1941 covered historical topics. To borrow from the American journalist Ed Murrow, Winston Churchill did not just send the English language into battle, he sent English history into battle too.

Successful war leadership requires a wide range of attributes, which include detailed planning, a sense of timing, understanding of psychology, inspirational speeches and proclamations, control of the news agenda, the capacity to be ruthless when necessary, calmness under pressure, and the ability to exploit advantages. Yet on top of all that, great war leaders also need a powerful sense of applied history. **H**

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Andrew Roberts’ latest book, *Leadership in War: Lessons From Those Who Made History*, was published by Allen Lane in October. He will be discussing war leadership on our podcast historyextra.com/podcast

READ

Who is the greatest leader in history? Andrew Roberts is among the experts answering this question in issue 20 of our sister magazine **BBC World Histories**. historyextra.com/bbc-world-histories-magazine



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York St John University 16 May 2020

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BOOKS YEAR



YEAR

OF THE 2019



2019



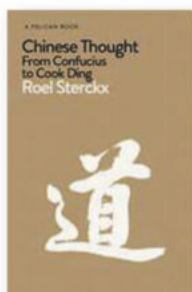
From medieval princesses and nomadic warriors to Hungarian football and the Falklands War, this year's best history books have tackled a mind-boggling array of topics and timeframes. Over the following pages, we've asked a panel of historians (who've written a book or two of their own) to nominate their favourite historical page-turners published in 2019

COMPILED BY **ELLIE CAWTHORNE**

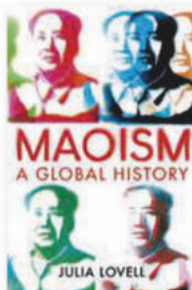
ILLUSTRATION BY **LAURIE AVON**



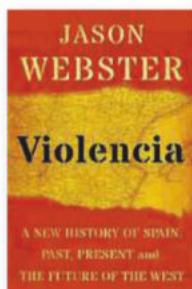
Rana Mitter



At a time in current affairs when understanding China and the Chinese mindset has become imperative, Roel Sterckx's *Chinese Thought: From Confucius to Cook Ding* (Pelican) brilliantly shows us the origins of that country's thinking. This account, by a leading scholar of traditional Chinese philosophy, analyses the major figures and shows how their viewpoints contrast (for example, Mencius as a believer in innate human goodness, while Xunzi and Han Feizi are sure that humans are basically bad), as well as considering how true it really is that China is still a Confucian society.



A rather later Chinese thinker is at the heart of Julia Lovell's monumental *Maoism: A Global History* (Bodley Head), a book that examines the mammoth influence of Chairman Mao not just in his native China but around the world, from Left Bank Paris to the mountains of Peru. It shows what a genuinely transnational impact his radical, violent political vision had.



Bloodshed also sits at the heart of Jason Webster's *Violencia: A New History of Spain - Past, Present, and the Future of the West* (Constable). A lyrical account of Spanish history across the centuries, Webster's book has the rhythms of a tune played out on a guitar in the hot sunlight. Its confident, well-paced prose is as much a pleasure as the wealth of knowledge about Spain it provides, on topics from the Inquisition to the civil war.

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Rana Mitter is the author of *Modern China: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press)



Golden years David Bowie joins Margaret Thatcher, Simon Le Bon and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* in Dominic Sandbrook's *Who Dares Wins*, an in-depth history of Britain from 1979–82

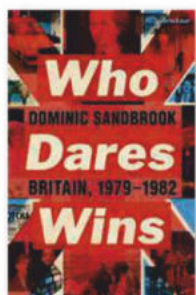


Great minds The philosopher Confucius, as seen in a c17th-century ink illustration. A new book on Chinese thought by Roel Sterckx considers whether China can still be seen as a Confucian society

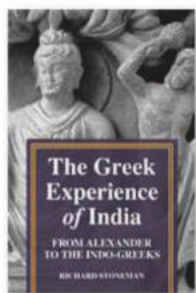
KEITH BARNES/ALAMY/BRIDGEMAN



Tom Holland

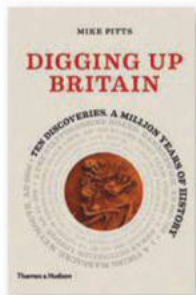


In *Who Dares Wins: Britain, 1979–1982* (Allen Lane), Dominic Sandbrook continues his brilliant history of modern Britain by taking us into the eighties, and the first years of Thatcher's government. The political manoeuvrings of 1979–82 are traced with a novelistic verve that would have done credit to *House of Cards*, but Sandbrook's interests range much further afield than Whitehall and Westminster. Ian Botham, Simon Le Bon and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* all have starring roles. The entry under 'Bowie, David' in the index is worth buying the book for alone.



Less entertaining, perhaps, is the index to Richard Stoneman's *The Greek Experience of India* (Princeton) – but the book itself has no need of racy indexes to enthrall

the reader. The question of what influences Greeks and Indians might have had on each other in the centuries that followed Alexander the Great is one that has always simultaneously fascinated and frustrated historians – so huge gratitude is due to Stoneman for shedding as much light on the issue as anyone is ever likely to.



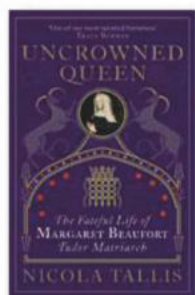
Equally adept at illuminating reaches of the past long lost to darkness is Mike Pitts' *Digging Up Britain* (Thames & Hudson), which gives us 10 eye-opening portraits

of recent archaeological discoveries. Yet the illumination is always flickering, and what we have learnt invariably tantalising. As Pitts puts it: "If we know anything, it is that there is so much more we don't know."

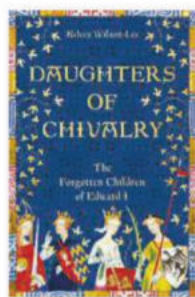
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Tom Holland's most recent book is *Dominion: The Making of the Western Mind* (Little, Brown)



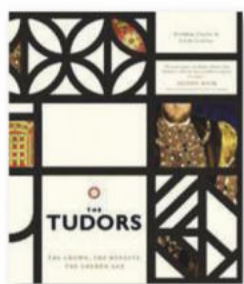
Tracy Borman



Margaret Beaufort has had a bad press. Various portrayed as a domineering matriarch, religious zealot and mother-in-law from hell, she has even been accused of murdering the princes in the Tower. In *Uncrowned Queen* (Michael O'Mara) Nicola Tallis sets the record straight. This beautifully written biography dispels the many myths surrounding Henry VII's much-maligned mother, and in their place presents a compelling portrait of a woman of extraordinary courage, vision and passion.



In the world of medieval chivalry, a princess was meant to be a virtuous and chaste young maiden patiently waiting to be rescued by a brave knight. But, as Kelcey Wilson-Lee vividly illustrates in *Daughters of Chivalry* (Picador), the reality was very different. Eleanora, Joanna, Margaret, Mary and Elizabeth were the daughters of Edward I and Eleanor of Castile. They emerge from this intricately researched book as a force to be reckoned with: women of courage, intellect and spirit – and, above all, startlingly modern.



Do we really need another book about the Tudors? Having devoured Siobhan Clarke and Linda Collins' *The Tudors: The Crown, The Dynasty, The Golden Age* (Andre Deutsch), my answer is a resounding 'yes'. The authors' expertise in the period – in particular its architectural and art treasures – shines through, telling the reader everything they need to know about this iconic dynasty.

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Tracy Borman is a Tudor historian whose latest book is *Henry VIII and the Men Who Made Him* (Hodder & Stoughton)

AWARD WINNERS

History books that bagged this year's literary prizes

Wolfson History Prize

Reckonings: Legacies of Nazi Persecution and the Quest for Justice by Mary Fulbrook

OUP, 672 pages, £25



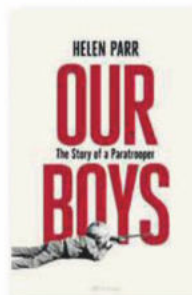
The Holocaust gave rise to a complex web of traumatic experiences. Mary Fulbrook's book aims to untangle that web, exploring how the legacies of Nazism

echoed down through successive generations of both victims and perpetrators. The Wolfson judges lauded *Reckonings* as "a masterly work which explores the shifting boundaries and structures of memory".

Longman-History Today Award

Our Boys: The Story of a Paratrooper by Helen Parr

Allen Lane, 416 pages, £20



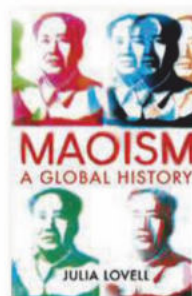
In *Our Boys*, Helen Parr explores the lasting impact of the Falklands War through the story of her Uncle Dave, a 19-year-old paratrooper who died in the conflict in 1982.

The Longman-History Today judges weren't the only ones moved by Parr's personal narrative: theirs was just one of a handful of nominations and awards *Our Boys* garnered in 2019.

Cundhill History Prize

Maoism: A Global History by Julia Lovell

Bodley Head, 624 pages, £30

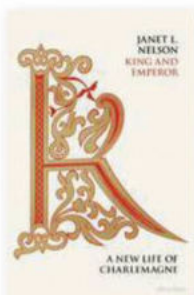


Has Maoism really been consigned to the history books? Julia Lovell argues not. In this new history (see Rana Mitter's picks, left), she reveals how Maoism still underpins

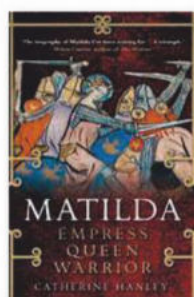
Chinese society and how its tentacles have crept across the world. The chair of the jury said: "Her book will dazzle readers with lucid and vivid insights into the power of a protean, and often deadly, ideology – and its enduring impact on our world today."



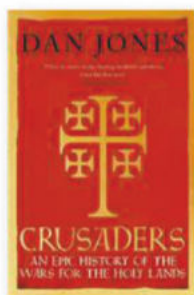
Helen Castor



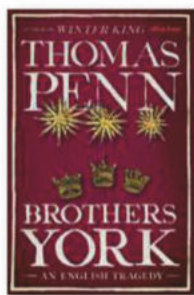
This has been such an outrageously good year for medieval history that, much like the Booker judges, I'm compelled to break the rules and offer not three but four choices (I know, I know). First, Janet L Nelson's *King and Emperor: A New Life of Charlemagne* (Allen Lane) is an immense achievement – brilliantly learned and profoundly wise, it is as revelatory about the practice of history as it is about the great man himself.



Catherine Hanley's *Matilda: Empress, Queen, Warrior* (Yale University Press) is, at last, the biography this great woman has always deserved, a book as lucid, forthright and utterly compelling as its remarkable subject.



Dan Jones's *Crusaders: An Epic History of the Wars for the Holy Lands* (Head of Zeus) is a narrative marvel, a sweeping tale ranging across continents and centuries that never loses sight of the humanity of its many protagonists or the resonance of the conflicts in which they fought.



Finally, Thomas Penn's *The Brothers York: An English Tragedy* (Allen Lane) tells the story of the three brothers at the heart of the Wars of the Roses with acute psychological insight and a superlative understanding of the political cross-currents of 15th-century Europe. It's a page-turner packed with game-changing analysis. Highly recommended.

Helen Castor's latest book is *Elizabeth I: A Study in Insecurity*, written for the Penguin Monarchs series



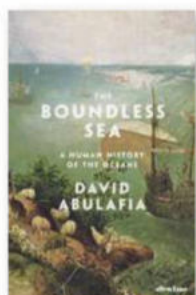
Alexander Watson



Roger Moorhouse's tale of Poland's doomed defence against overwhelming attack by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, *First to Fight: The Polish War 1939* (Bodley Head), had me enthralled. The book helps remedy some historical amnesia: this brutal invasion is often marginalised in standard histories, despite being the first campaign of Europe's Second World War and the trigger for Britain to enter the conflict. Moorhouse recounts the horror in large part through anguished Polish eyes. A well-researched, riveting read.



A chilling account of the aftermath of the world's worst nuclear disaster, Kate Brown's *Manual for Survival: A Chernobyl Guide to the Future* (Allen Lane) also moved me. Though some scientists have challenged the book's more extreme claims about the long-term health and environmental impacts of the Chernobyl Power Plant's meltdown in 1986, nothing I have read conveys more vividly the accident's lasting misery. This is captivating, controversial history.



My latest read, and the book that has impressed me most, is David Abulafia's *The Boundless Sea* (Allen Lane). Immensely erudite and readable, it is as 'boundless' as the waters in its title, exploring human interaction across the world's waves from the Polynesians who sailed the Pacific tens of thousands of years ago to modern container ships. Trade, settlement and the violence that both could bring are at the heart of this fascinating global story.

Alexander Watson is the author of *Ring of Steel* (Penguin) and *The Fortress: The Great Siege of Przemyśl* (Allen Lane)



A royal rewrite Charlemagne – the subject of a major new biography by Janet L Nelson this year – is crowned by Pope Leo III on Christmas Day, AD 800



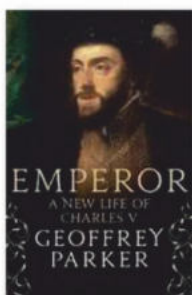
Toxic fallout Radioactivity levels are recorded in the aftermath of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster – as detailed in Kate Brown's *Manual for Survival*



Nerves of steel Polish operative Witold Pilecki, whose life-threatening work as an undercover agent in Auschwitz is documented in *The Volunteer*

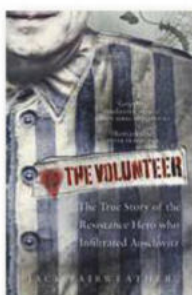


Suzannah Lipscomb



My first choice has to be Geoffrey Parker's *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V* (Yale University Press). It's a magnificent biography of a mercurial, kind and

cruel, brilliant and foolish man, who ruled over much of the known world in the 16th century. In a work of stunning scholarship, Parker draws on an incredible amount of documentary evidence and delivers his findings in elegant prose to produce an epic and vivid life of the emperor, described at his death as "the greatest man who has ever lived".



Jack Fairweather's *The Volunteer: The True Story of the Resistance Hero Who Infiltrated Auschwitz* (WH Allen) tells the astonishing story of underground

operative Witold Pilecki, who chose to be imprisoned in Auschwitz in order to uncover what was happening there. It is a work of narrative history that reads like a novel, in spare prose that is as compelling as it is harrowing. One is entirely caught up in the awfulness and heroism of Witold's tale.



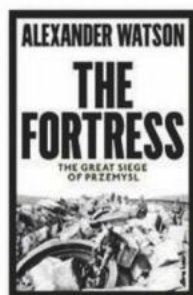
Orlando Figes's *The Europeans: Three Lives and the Making of a Cosmopolitan Culture* (Allen Lane) is an extraordinary, capacious and accomplished

biography of three intertwining characters: the writer Ivan Turgenev, the singer Pauline Viardot and Pauline's connoisseur husband, Louis. Deeply researched and engaging, it is filled with revelations, and takes us fascinatingly into European culture in the 19th century.

.....
Suzannah Lipscomb's latest book is *The Voices of Nîmes: Women, Sex and Marriage in Reformation Languedoc* (OUP)

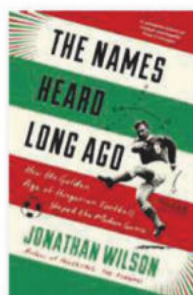


Dominic Sandbrook



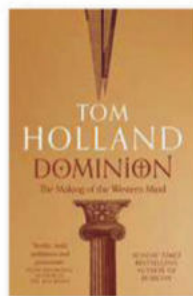
Alexander Watson's account of the battle for an Austro-Hungarian citadel, *The Fortress: The Great Siege of Przemysl*, (Allen Lane), is brilliantly

researched and superbly written. This was one of the turning points in modern European history: had the Russians broken through earlier, the story of the last century might have been very different. Even more importantly, Przemysl offered a bleak preview of what was coming: nationalism, anti-Semitism and a whirlwind of hatred. Grim stuff, but magnificently done.



Jonathan Wilson's *The Names Heard Long Ago* (Blink) might initially seem like a book about Hungarian football – but it's more than that. Wilson recreates the vanished

world of the Budapest coffeehouse at the turn of the last century, the chaos of the interwar years, the tragedy of the Hungarian Uprising and the doomed romance of the Mighty Magyars. In Wilson's own words, it's a book about "courage and tragedy, about survival and death" – and you don't have to like football to find it a fascinating read.



The bravest history book of the year is undoubtedly Tom Holland's *Dominion: The Making of the Western Mind* (Little, Brown), in which the swash-

buckling popular historian argues that our modern world was shaped by Christianity. Taking in everything from Augustine and Martin Luther to John Lennon and Harvey Weinstein, it's exciting, erudite, amusing and provocative – but above all, immense fun. I can't recommend it too highly.

.....
Dominic Sandbrook's latest book is *Who Dares Wins: Britain, 1979–1982* (Allen Lane)

THE YEAR AHEAD



Ellie Cawthorne on books to look out for in 2020

In the postroom of our office in Bristol, *BBC History Magazine's* pigeonhole is easy to spot. It's the one overflowing with book-shaped packages, surrounded by a landslide of jiffy bags and bubble-wrapped historical fiction. One thing is for sure, there is no shortage of new history books to explore. And as we move into 2020, this shows little sign of letting up: there are already a raft of fresh titles to look forward to.

Next year marks 400 years since the **Mayflower** set sail, and I'll be kicking off 2020 by speaking to author Stephen Tomkins about the religious intolerance that led to its launch.

Later in 2020, the social history of domestic life will be getting a much-needed overhaul: Annie Gray (below) will be rustling up a 'culinary biography' of **Churchill's cook**; Ruth Goodman will reveal how coal triggered a '**domestic revolution**'; and Emma Griffin will dissect the workings of the **Victorian household economy**.

Books on the Second World War look set to be as popular as ever. The second instalment of Dan Todman's **Britain's War** will offer an all-encompassing look at Britons' experience of 1942–47, while John Gooch's **Mussolini's War** promises to provide a 'definitive account' of Italy's conflict.

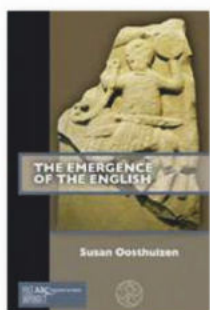
In May, Stephen Taylor heads for the high seas with **Sons of the Waves**, delving into the grim realities of seafaring in the navy's golden age.

Come the autumn, Lucy Worsley will be unravelling the mystery of the 'queen of crime', **Agatha Christie**. And finally, if you've ever been curious about the Freemasons, look out for John Dickie's **The Craft**, which uncovers the organisation's fascinating history.



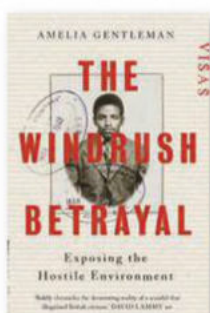


Michael Wood



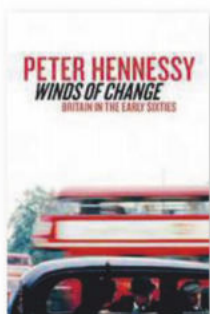
I've been enjoying Susan Oosthuizen's thought-provoking *The Emergence of the English* (Arc Humanities Press). It deftly synthesizes the growing consensus of

historians and archaeologists as to the origins of the English in the slow transformation of late Romano-British communities in post-imperial eastern Britain. An accessible contribution to the growing debate about what should, or should not, be called 'Anglo-Saxon'.



In *The Windrush Betrayal* (Guardian Faber), journalist Amelia Gentleman tells the appalling stories of the 'Windrush generation', who came to Britain from the Caribbean

in and after 1948. More than 60 years later, they found themselves targeted as illegal migrants, threatened, detained, and in some cases "repatriated" to countries they had no memory of after a lifetime spent in the UK. It may seem jaw-dropping, but with Brexit looming, Gentleman fears there are more 'hostile environment' moments to come.



Lastly, *Winds of Change* (Allen Lane), the third in Peter Hennessy's marvellous trilogy, gives us a portrait of a nation still coming to terms with its costly victory in

1945 and the subsequent loss of its empire. Like the previous volumes, it's a terrific mix of social history and cabinet-room politics. I'd love to see Peter bring the tale right up to Brexit, which I suspect he would see as drawing a line under Britain's story as a great power. Unputdownable.

.....
Michael Wood is professor of public history at the University of Manchester



New arrivals Johny Pitts' 2019 book *Afropean* examines the experience of migrant communities in Europe, such as these Jamaican arrivals familiarising themselves with the London Underground in 1948



All that glitters A Scythian gold pectoral plaque from seventh/sixth-century BC Siberia. The ancient culture that made such spectacular artefacts is the subject of a new book by Barry Cunliffe

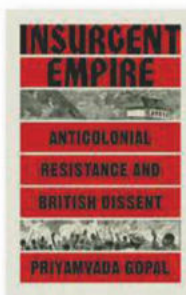


Olivette Otele



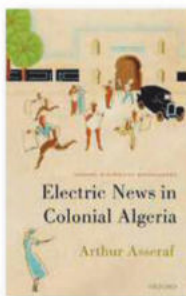
The books that forced me to stop and pause this year were those that made me reconsider narrative and emotion in history writing. Johny Pitts' *Afropean: Notes from*

Black Europe (Allen Lane) tells stories of survival and the ingenuity of those on the edge of several worlds. Shifting our gaze from migratory experiences to daily practices of resilience, the book invites us to witness the journeys and creativity of communities often unrecorded in studies of European history, highlighting the commonality of African-European experiences across the continent.



Priyamvada Gopal's *Insurgent Empire: Anticolonial Resistance and British Dissent* (Verso) places voices from the history of anti-colonialism centre stage. This

powerfully written book focuses on people whose call for action and activism unsettled the empire and inspired British liberation movements. Unapologetically rebellious, the insurgents did not surf on the waves of victimhood. Instead, they united, planned and attacked the imperial powers in various ways.

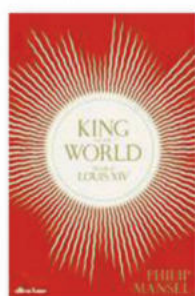


Imperialism rested on an arsenal of communication tools. In *Electric News in Colonial Algeria* (OUP), Arthur Asseraf reveals how the reception of global news impacted on the country. Expansive in its source material and full of in-depth analysis, this fascinating book examines how the arrival of world news created both dissension and cohesion among late 19th- and early 20th-century Algerians.

Olivette Otele has just been appointed professor of the history of slavery at the University of Bristol

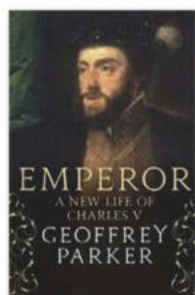


Simon Sebag Montefiore



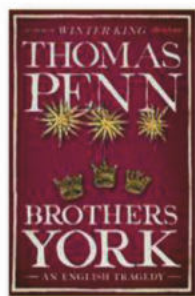
Philip Mansel's *King of the World* (Allen Lane) is the ultimate biography of the Sun King, Louis XIV. It's a work of scholarly analysis and flamboyant anecdote,

teeming with court intrigue, international conflict and sexual politics. At its heart is a king who played the global power game, and Mansel offers us a portrait of runaway hubris.



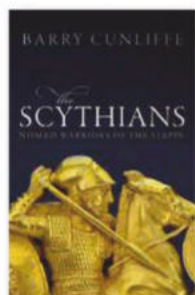
Similarly brilliant is Geoffrey Parker's *Emperor: The Life of Charles V* (Yale). Totally accessible and exciting, it brings to life not just the gripping character of

Charles V himself, the Habsburg heir who inherited an empire on which the sun never set, but also his entire world.



In *The Brothers York* (Allen Lane), Thomas Penn delivers a gripping court history charting the rise and tragic fall of the Yorks, a dynasty with all the majestic brutality of

a Mafia family. Penn brings the characters to life as real people rather than just names from the history books.



Barry Cunliffe's *The Scythians: Nomad Warriors of the Steppe* (OUP) is a scintillating tour de force from probably the greatest scholar of European archaeology. Using

their golden artefacts, tombs and accounts from Herodotus and others, Cunliffe recreates the Scythian world with its terrifying human sacrifices and famed nomadic riders who took on the greatest empires of their day.

Simon Sebag Montefiore's latest book is *Voices of History* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson)

BESTSELLERS

Waterstones' 10 top selling history books of this year so far

The Song of Simon de Montfort: England's First Revolutionary

by Sophie Thérèse Ambler

Appeasing Hitler: Chamberlain, Churchill and the Road to War

by Tim Bouverie

The Anarchy: The Relentless Rise of the East India Company

by William Dalrymple

Chastise: The Dambusters Story 1943

by Max Hastings

Normandy '44: D-Day and the Battle for France

by James Holland

Dominion: The Making of the Western Mind

by Tom Holland

Crusaders: An Epic History of the Wars for the Holy Lands

by Dan Jones

The Mountbattens: Their Lives and Loves

by Andrew Lownie

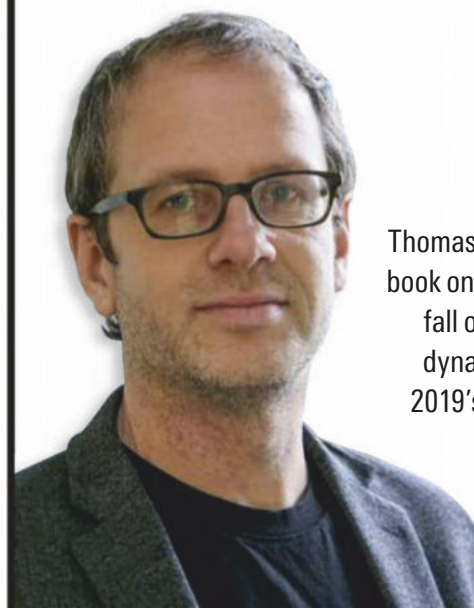
Margaret Thatcher: The Authorized Biography, Volume Three: Herself Alone

by Charles Moore

The Brothers York: An English Tragedy

by Thomas Penn

Accurate at time of printing



Thomas Penn's new book on the rise and fall of the Yorkist dynasty is one of 2019's bestsellers



Nick Rennison selects this year's best historical fiction



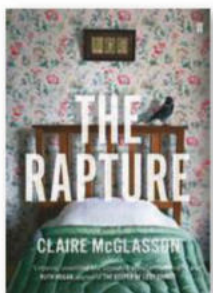
The Victorian era continues to attract historical novelists, and Elizabeth Macneal's *The Doll Factory* (Picador) was one of the year's most impressive excursions

into 19th-century London. Iris Whittle escapes the drudgery of her daily work when she catches the eye of Pre-Raphaelite painter Louis Frost and becomes both his model and his mistress. Meanwhile, sinister taxidermist Silas Reed's obsession with Iris grows ever more dangerous. Macneal's lively tale searchingly examines the restrictions placed on women and the possessiveness of men, both well-meaning and malign.



Set at the end of the 18th century, *The Warlow Experiment* (Serpent's Tail) by Alix Nathan tells the story of Herbert Powyss, a country gentleman with an interest in

science, who devises an extraordinary experiment. He will pay a man to live for seven years in total isolation. But how will his subject cope with solitude? Nathan's unsettling novel charts the progress of Powyss's bizarre experiment.

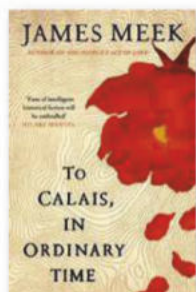


A 1920s cult, awaiting Christ's Second Coming in the suburban homes of Bedford, is the unlikely subject matter for Claire McGlasson's debut

novel, *The Rapture* (Faber). The Panacea Society was a real-life sect whose last member died as recently as 2012. McGlasson's fictional account of rivalries within its ranks, and one young acolyte's attempt to break free, provides a touching story of delusion, misplaced faith and the power of an unexpected love affair.

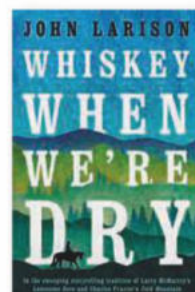


Grisly end A woodcut showing a priest praying over the body of a plague victim. James Meek's historical novel *To Calais, in Ordinary Time* follows the fates of three characters in 1348 just as the Black Death reaches England



Moving many centuries further back, *To Calais, in Ordinary Time* (Canongate) by James Meek is set in 1348, as the Black Death reached

England. Three very different characters find their fates entwined as they make their way to the south coast. Berna is a nobleman's daughter in flight from the marriage her father is imposing on her; Will Quate is a young ploughman-turned-archer en route to the wars in France; and Thomas is an intellectual man of religion. In Meek's linguistically inventive novel, they must all confront their own mortality as the plague approaches.



Westerns are often dismissed as pulp fiction but, at its best, the genre can produce truly memorable novels. John Larison's *Whiskey When We're Dry* (No Exit Press)

follows the fortunes of teenager Jessilyn Harney, who dons male dress and sets off to track down her long-lost brother, a legendary gun-slinging outlaw. As Jess recounts her adventures in her own compelling voice, Larison uses the traditional western form to explore very contemporary ideas about identity and gender. **H**

Nick Rennison is the author of *Carver's Truth* (Corvus)



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ENCOUNTERS

76 DIARY: LISTEN / WATCH / VISIT

By Jon Bauckham and Jonathan Wright

84 REVIEW: The King

86 EXPLORE... Knole, Kent

WATCH

Seasonal songs

Christmas is almost here, a time when the nation gathers together to sing carols learnt in childhood. It wasn't always so. When the Puritans held power in England, they regarded singalongs as frivolous, and wanted to ban such celebrations altogether.

As Lucy Worsley reveals in a one-off documentary tracing the history of our best-loved carols, this is just part of a richer history – one that can be traced back to pagan times when 'wassailing', going door-to-door singing, was part of celebrations to mark midwinter.

The church couldn't hold out against carols and gradually a canon of seasonal music became established,

sometimes with the help of folk songs. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958), for instance, borrowed the melody for 'O Little Town of Bethlehem' from a tune he heard sung by a farm labourer.

What unites different carols is that they represent a strand of popular music, as evidenced by the way 'Silent Night' was sung during the unofficial Christmas truce of 1914.

The programme features music from the Kingdom Choir and the Hampton Court Choir.

Lucy Worsley's Christmas Carol Odyssey

BBC Four / Scheduled for December



**From the same
hymn sheet**

Lucy Worsley charts the
history of our best-loved
Christmas carols with
musical accompaniment
from members of the
Hampton Court Choir



Japanese children attend a Catholic school in 1946

LISTEN

Disputed narratives

Considering the way historians argue over interpretations of the past, it's hardly surprising that how history is taught is often such a contentious issue. So who decides what goes into the textbooks? In a new series, Priya Atwal looks at how countries tell their national stories in different ways, and why, for example, history in Afghanistan stops a century ago.

The show also looks at the teaching of history closer to home. It's a story that takes in the so-called 'history wars' during Michael Gove's time as education minister, and reveals why a version of the national story directed by those at the top is unlikely to be taught anytime soon.

Lies My Teacher Told Me?

BBC Radio 4 / Scheduled for December



Silhouette portraits depicting John Player, a former mayor of Saffron Walden, and his wife

VISIT

Making a mark

What constitutes a portrait? Is it simply a photograph or painting of someone's likeness, or can it be applied to more abstract representations of the self? That's the question posed by a new exhibition at Saffron Walden Museum in Essex, which looks at the variety of ways in which impressions of people are left behind.

As well as items such as coins and busts, the display features finger casts made by local residents, with the intention of creating a unique 'portrait' of the area for posterity.

From Death Masks to Diaries

Saffron Walden Museum / Until 22 March 2020 / swmuseumsoc.org.uk/current-exhibition

WATCH

Traces of the past

Once again eavesdropping on digs around the country, Professor Alice Roberts (pictured) presents the eighth series of archaeology show *Digging for Britain*. This time she's joined by roving reporter Dr Naoise Mac Sweeney, and the finds on view include the childhood home of Lady Jane Grey and an Iron Age burial.

There's also a special episode devoted to the Second World War. This follows marine archaeologists as they attempt to raise the rare remains of a British Fairey Barracuda torpedo bomber from the Solent, and tells the story of the Windermere boys – children who survived the Holocaust and were resettled in the Lake District.

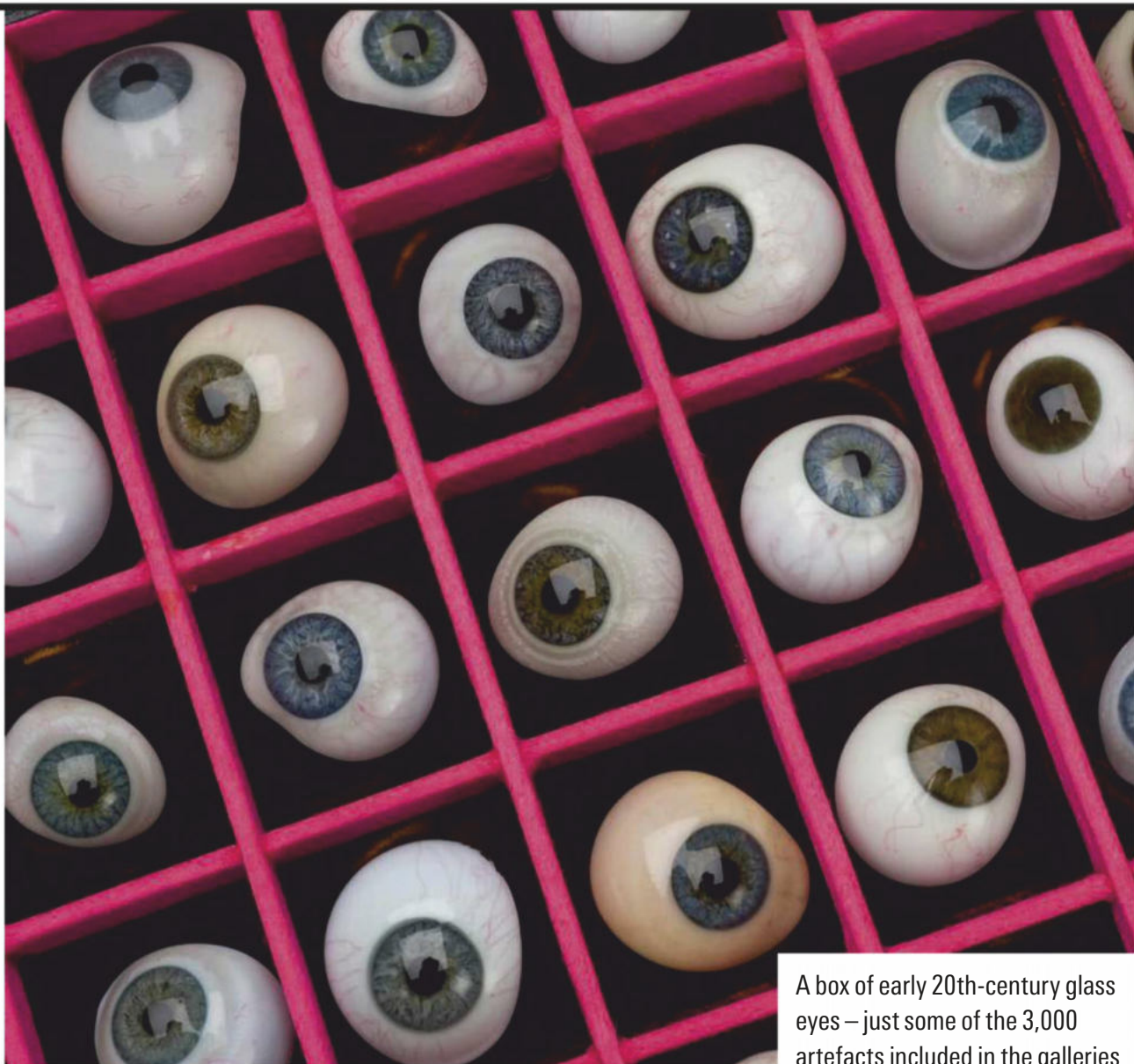


Digging for Britain

BBC Four and iPlayer / Due to air from late November

WEEKLY TV & RADIO

Visit historyextra.com for weekly updates on upcoming TV and radio programmes



A box of early 20th-century glass eyes – just some of the 3,000 artefacts included in the galleries

VISIT

Medical marvels

Visitors to London's Science Museum can now explore thousands of medical artefacts from across the globe following the completion of five new permanent galleries.

Heralded as the "most significant development" in the South Kensington attraction's 162-year history, the 3,000 square metres of exhibition space plays host to an array of items from the Science Museum Group vaults, along with treasures collected by the pharmaceutical entrepreneur Sir Henry Wellcome (1853–1936).

From Tudor amputation saws to modern-day surgical robots, the galleries explore the ways in which medicine has evolved over the past 500 years, aided by vivid personal testimonies from doctors and their patients.

Other unusual items include a case of miniature phrenological heads, an iron 'mortsafe' used to prevent grave robberies, and a sample of penicillin mould that Alexander Fleming presented to a friend in 1935.

Medicine: The Wellcome Galleries

Science Museum, London / Permanent display / Free entry / sciencemuseum.org.uk

HISTORY ON THE BOX

“You have two powerful men, both of whom believe that God is on their side – yet only one of them can win”



Having previously examined the collapse of monarchy in *Charles I: Downfall of a King*, historian **LISA HILTON** tells us about her follow-up BBC Four series, which traces the tense days leading up to Charles I's execution in 1649



Margarete Kraus, a Czech Roma woman, pictured shortly after the war. Her Auschwitz camp number tattoo is faintly visible on her left arm

VISIT

A painful legacy

During the Second World War, as many as 500,000 people from the Roma and Sinti communities of Europe were murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators. Yet despite the shocking death toll, the relative lack of attention afforded the victims and their plight has led historians such as Professor Eve Rosenhaft to describe the genocide as the “forgotten Holocaust”.

In an effort to remedy this, a new exhibition at The Wiener Holocaust Library – the world's first institution devoted to Holocaust studies – tells the stories of those who were affected, using documents and eyewitness accounts collected by the library during the 1950s.

The display also examines the postwar lives of the Roma and Sinti people, and the battles that survivors (such as Margarete Kraus, above) faced in order to gain formal recognition for the persecution they suffered.

Crucially, however, the exhibition seeks to humanise the victims, with moving photographs of families and their loved ones shown throughout.

Forgotten Victims: The Nazi Genocide of the Roma and Sinti

The Wiener Holocaust Library, London / Until 11 March 2020 / Free entry / wienerlibrary.co.uk

Why did you decide to focus on the final few days of Charles I's reign?

The Civil Wars were over and Charles had been defeated. Nonetheless, the idea of regicide was something that had simply never been done before, certainly in the history of Europe. Taking legal and public measures to execute a king in the name of parliament, on behalf of the people, was completely revolutionary – it was the most radical act. There was no provision in the law for it, there was no public consensus for it to happen, and yet happen it did.

So overall, we were interested in going through how and why this drastic story unravelled in such a tight timeframe [at the turn of 1648 and 1649].

Was it inevitable those facing down the king ‘had’ to kill him?

No, it wasn't inevitable. There could have been other solutions. He could have abdicated, he could have gone into exile, or he could have agreed to the terms that he'd been offered by parliament of becoming a sort of figurehead monarch.

Yet through a combination of Cromwell's determination and Charles's – you could say arrogance, you could say missteps, you could say blind optimism – these simply didn't come about.

Tell us about the motivations of the two main players, Oliver Cromwell and Charles I.

Some experts believe that Cromwell was absolutely motivated by his piety, by his sense of communicating with his God and believing that what he was doing was Godly work. However, others see him as much more of an opportunist who was power-hungry, who wanted to be at the apex of a new republican government.

In Charles's case, he too believed that he was God's anointed and that no man had the right to judge him or to try him. So you have these two powerful men, both of whom believe in the same God, both of whom believe that God is on their side, and yet of course only one of them can win.

Is it almost too hard for us to grasp how revolutionary this was?

If an American president were to be in the process of being impeached, and his opponents decided to put him on trial for his life and to apply the death penalty upon him, according to the rules of their country, by lethal injection, I think it would be about that radical. It would be that shocking.

That sounds like a bad joke, but it's not. It's exactly the situation people were confronted with in early 1649. **H**

The three part series, which has the working title *Charles I: To Kill a King*, is scheduled to be broadcast on BBC Four in December



A coloured woodcut thought to depict the execution of Charles I on 30 January 1649



Enjoy a spicy Mexican delight this festive season

TASTE

Christmas tamales

Eaten by Mesoamerican civilisations as far back as 8000 BC, the humble tamale doesn't necessarily sound like a Christmas dish.

However, these doughy delights – baked inside corn husks and filled with meat and vegetables – have been adopted as a festive staple by modern Mexicans, who gather around Christmas time for *tamaladas*, or tamale-making parties.

Whereas their ancestors may have found the parcels a handy treat to take out on hunting trips, today they're simply enjoyed as part of a fun family tradition.

Difficulty: 6/10 / **Time:** 4 hours

INGREDIENTS

Filling:

500g pork loin
1 large onion, halved
1 garlic clove
4 red chillies
450ml water
½ tsp salt

Dough:

500g dried corn husks
150g lard (or shortening)
300ml beef stock
300g masa harina (maize flour)
1 tsp baking powder
½ tsp salt
225ml sour cream

METHOD

Put the pork, onion and garlic in a large cooking pot and cover with water. Bring it to the boil, then simmer until the meat is tender. This should take about two hours.

Deseed the chillies and simmer in a separate pot with 450ml of water for 20 minutes. Once cooled, blitz the chillies with the water until smooth. Strain, add the salt and set aside.

As long as the pork is fully cooked, shred it using two forks and stir in 225ml of the chilli sauce. Once you're done, fill a bowl of warm water and soak the corn husks.

Using an electric mixer, beat the lard with a tablespoon of the beef stock until it whips up and becomes airy. Stir the masa harina, baking powder and salt together in a separate bowl and gradually combine with the lard mixture, adding more stock as needed, until the dough has a 'bouncy' texture.

Drain the corn husks and pat them dry, before kneading a portion of dough on top of each one. Place a spoonful of pork in the centre of the dough and fold the sides of husks inwards like a parcel, securing them using spare husk strips as 'string'.

Cook in a steamer for an hour, peel the husks away and serve with chilli sauce and sour cream to taste.

Recipe adapted from The World's Best Street Food (Lonely Planet, 2012)



A crowd enjoys bhangra music at the Empire Ballroom in London, 1986

LISTEN

A decade of change

By the 1980s, the pioneering migrants from the Indian subcontinent who'd come to the UK in the 1950s and 1960s had established themselves – to the extent that many finally acknowledged they weren't ever going to live permanently in Asia again. Covering 1981–88, Kavita Puri's returning series *Three Pounds in My Pocket* explores how this laying down of deeper roots made the decade hugely important in the history of the British south Asian community.

These were years when there was a cultural awakening, led by second-generation British south Asians, and sometimes expressed in work that challenged community taboos. This was also a time when the unity of the diaspora, born in part of fights against racism, began to dissipate, as reactions to Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988) showed.

Other subjects under consideration include debates around multiculturalism and the reasons why members of the community voted for the Conservatives at the height of Thatcherism in 1987. The series concludes by looking at nuances of south Asian identity that are still little understood within wider British society.

Three Pounds in My Pocket

BBC Radio 4 / Scheduled for 6 December

LISTEN

Downfall of a tyrant

When it finally arrived, the downfall of Nicolae Ceaușescu was shockingly fast and as brutal as his regime. On Christmas Day 1989, Romania's leader and his wife, Elena, were executed after the briefest of trials. A hated dictator was gone.

Three decades later, has the hope of the revolution been sustained? A new series by Tessa Dunlop, who has lived in Romania, looks at how the uprising began in the city of Timișoara; discovers a legacy of corruption, cynicism and emigration linked to the country's political situation; and finds nostalgia for the Cold War era among some citizens.

Romania's Revolution 30 Years on

BBC Radio 4 / Scheduled for 23 December



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VISIT

Visions of a polymath

Among the countless artistic treasures housed in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle, the archive's huge collection of drawings by Leonardo da Vinci is among its most valuable assets.

Following a series of mini exhibitions across the UK earlier this year, the drawings now make their way north to the Palace of Holyroodhouse, having spent the summer months displayed in London.

From anatomical sketches to plans for elaborate machines, the material showcases Leonardo's incredible range of interests, complete with the annotations that offer an insight into the workings of his mind.

Leonardo da Vinci: A Life in Drawing

Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh /
Until 15 March 2020 / rct.uk/leonardo500



A ceremonial cape presented to George IV by Kamehameha II, king of the Hawaiian Islands

VISIT

Exquisite and exotic

George IV is often characterised as a drunken buffoon, whose life of excess led him to become intensely disliked by his subjects. However, the monarch and regent was also a man of great taste, who collected some of the finest artworks in the world.

Filling the void left by Leonardo da Vinci: A Life in Drawing (see left), Buckingham Palace hosts a new exhibition featuring some of the most important items in George IV's private collection, including paintings by Rubens and treasures from overseas.

George IV: Art & Spectacle

Buckingham Palace, London / Until 3 May 2020 /
rct.uk/whatson

LISTEN

Epic struggle

Perhaps because it was first published in the USSR in 1952, *Stalingrad*, by Vasily Grossman (1905–64), long had a reputation as being a Soviet-friendly take on the brutal battle that was such a turning point in the Second World War.

By contrast, the novelist's sequel, *Life and Fate*, his account of life under Stalin, which had to be smuggled to the west to see the light of day, was widely acclaimed as a masterpiece.

Now, a reappraisal is under way in earnest following the recent first English translation of *Stalingrad* in a version that incorporates politically risky elements from Grossman's notebooks. Interest in the novel looks set to grow further as it's adapted for BBC Radio 4 for the first time, with a cast including Kenneth Branagh, Greta Scacchi, Kenneth Cranham, Mark Bonnar and Doon Mackichan.

Adding context by telling the story of the book's creation, *Stalingrad: Destiny of a Novel* (BBC Radio 4, 2 December) is a five-part documentary that explores Grossman's struggles with getting material past the censors. It's presented by the historian Catherine Merridale and features readings from Anton Lesser. **H**

Stalingrad

BBC Radio 4 / Scheduled for 30 November



Stalingrad author Vasily Grossman pictured while working as a war reporter in Schwerin, Germany, 1945

2019
DECEMBER

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5

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WATCH

The po-faced king of a monochrome world

Warmth and exuberance are in short supply in *The King* – a new Netflix drama charting the blood-spattered rise to power of Henry V – writes **LAUREN JOHNSON**

Two armies clash on a medieval battlefield. One of the combatants sustains a wound. He squirms slowly from the melee, but before reaching safety, is casually dispatched by a gore-smeared knight. It's the grimmest of fates. However, within the context of the new David Michôd-directed film *The King*, it's hardly unexpected. This is a story of death, random violence and relentless greyness alleviated only by the occasional splatter of blood.

The King – now streaming on Netflix – relates the rise of Henry V (Timothée Chalamet) in the first two decades of the 15th century. We open on 'Hal' as a disaffected and dissolute prince in c1400, then follow his reluctant accession, French campaigns, surprise victory at the battle of Agincourt and eventual peace with France, cemented by his marriage to French princess Catherine of Valois in 1420. Not coincidentally, this is the same period Shakespeare

explored in his *Henriad* (*Henry IV Parts I and II*, and *Henry V*). We find the wayward Hal puking in the streets outside Mistress Quickly's inn and self-indulgently griping about his father, King Henry IV, to salt-of-the-earth northerner John Falstaff. In other words, this is not history. It's Shakespeare Redux.

The bloated, jocular Falstaff is one of Shakespeare's best-loved characters, but he is entirely fictional. His name echoes Henry V's contemporary, Sir John Fastolf, a successful soldier of the Hundred Years' War who fled Joan of Arc's forces at Patay in 1429 and thus gained an unearned reputation for cowardice. Here, he serves as Henry's youthful mentor and (rather surprisingly) military tactician, one of the king's last trusted allies.

Political operators

A theme of *The King* is how monarchs have no friends, "only followers and foes". Sure enough, Henry's advisers vie for control by manipulating him. In fact, the only disinterested advice Hal receives



// It is hard to square Hal's pacifism with the Henry V who did not baulk at starving innocents to death or massacring PoWs //

comes from the women in his life: his sister Philippa and his wife (though both make all-too-brief cameos). This reflects a wider truth: noblewomen were political operators, too, and their counsel was valued by their families. During the Hundred Years' War, queens had vital roles as intercessors and regents, negotiating between their warring relatives – and for their own material advantage.

That Hal listens to these women is, unfortunately, misleading. The historical Henry V accorded his wife little political influence, even denying her an official position during the infancy of their son. He

was the sort of king who locked up his own stepmother on charges of witchcraft to get his hands on her estates, not one who invited honest advice from his female relatives.

The King's greatest departure from history, however, is Hal's pacifism – he sanctimoniously condemns his father's warmongering and only invades France after enduring assassination attempts. It is hard to square this with the historical Henry V, who was on campaign in Ireland at 12 and first fought in battle at 16. Henry V was a soldier before all else, and a pitiless one. He did not baulk at starving innocents to death during the siege of Rouen, nor massacring prisoners of war at Agincourt.

The 15th century was undoubtedly brutal and miserable, but *The King* pointedly sidesteps the splendour and beauty of a royal court, and the barded pomp of an army attempting to overawe its enemy. This dour, monochrome world verges

occasionally on dull, bursting only into unexpected technicolour when Robert Pattinson's 'Dauphin' lurches onto screen, gleefully pronouncing deranged threats in his execrable French accent. His lewd arch-villainy is worth the price of admission alone, although it feels like he wandered onto set from a completely different film; one rather less po-faced and perhaps more engaging.

After all, this is the tale of the destruction of chivalry and maturing of "one of England's great kings" (as Henry's advisor puts it). Shakespeare knew that it's a story worth telling in bold colours. **H**

.....
Lauren Johnson is the author of *Shadow King: The Life and Death of Henry VI* (Head of Zeus, 2019)

The King

Currently streaming on Netflix

Seat of power

Timothée Chalamet stars as Henry V in *The King*, "a story of death, random violence and relentless greyness alleviated only by the occasional splatter of blood"

NETFLIX



EXPLORE... KNOLE

The grandest of family homes

Long the country seat of the Sackville family, Knole is a magnificent house in the Weald of Kent famous the world over for its connections to the Bloomsbury writers. **NIGEL JONES** uncovers its secrets

How many rooms are there at Knole, the sprawling mansion near Sevenoaks in Kent described by novelist Virginia Woolf as “more like a town than a house”? Legend says there are 365, one for each day of the year. “I don’t think anyone has actually ever counted,” laughs Gerry Warner, of the National Trust, which has managed Knole since the 1940s. What is indisputable is that Knole is one of the largest, most beautiful and most fascinating of Britain’s myriad historical homes – and a home, moreover, still inhabited by the 13th generation of the Sackville-Wests, the same family that has lived at the house since acquiring it in 1603.

Knole was originally a church manor, largely built by archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Bourchier in the late 1400s. Like Hampton Court, the Thameside palace built by Cardinal Wolsey, Knole took the fancy of Henry VIII, who visited to hunt deer. In 1538, Henry made Thomas Cranmer, Knole’s owner, an offer that Cranmer, also archbishop of Canterbury, could not refuse. “He basically demanded that Cranmer hand the house over to the crown,” says Warner. “As a loyal courtier, he had to comply.”

Knole was bought back from the crown by Thomas Sackville, 1st Earl of Dorset, a few decades later. In the Civil War, the family briefly lost out when they backed the royalists, and Knole was raided by Roundheads, but the family’s considerable fortunes were restored under Charles II. Over the next few centuries, successive Sackvilles stuffed the house’s rooms and galleries with paintings,

furniture and tapestries from across Europe. Today, this makes Knole a veritable treasure chest of culture and craftsmanship for the public to enjoy, and for the National Trust to conserve.

Although primogeniture traditionally meant that male Sackvilles owned Knole, women have always played a big part in its story, from Lady Anne Clifford and Frances Cranfield, the heiresses whose huge dowries funded the early estate, to Giovanna Zanerini, an Italian ballerina known as ‘La Baccelli’, beloved mistress of the 18th-century culture-vulture John Sackville, 3rd Duke of Dorset. An erotic nude statue modelled on La Baccelli still adorns the house, although the dancer herself had to leave Knole when the duke later wed a respectable heiress.

The Sackvilles often helped maintain their fortune by marriage. Lady Arabella Cope, for example, who ran Knole in the early 19th century, married in to the family. But the woman who really put Knole on the map was the writer Vita Sackville-West. Although as a woman she could never inherit, Vita passionately loved the house where she grew up, and made it a central ‘character’ in several books. Her lover, Virginia Woolf, a fellow member of the Bloomsbury group, memorably portrayed Knole in her novel *Orlando*, a transgender fantasy transcending the centuries.

By the end of the Second World War, the British aristocracy was falling on hard times, and the Sackvilles turned the vast house and 100 acres of the 1,000-acre estate surrounding it over to the National Trust. In exchange, the family are permitted to go on living in their ancestral home. So it is that the hundreds of thousands of people who visit Knole annually can today share the enjoyment of a house and deer park that were once the preserve of a privileged few. **H**

Nigel Jones is a journalist and biographer

VISIT For more information, visit the website: nationaltrust.org.uk/knole

// The Bloomsbury group writer Vita Sackville-West passionately loved Knole and made it a ‘character’ in several of her books //



Picture perfect
Knole’s Brown Gallery shows off portraits from the 16th and 17th centuries



NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES-ANDREAS VON EINSIEDEL/DAVID DICKSON



LEFT: Knole, a house on an epic scale that's now run by the National Trust
 FAR LEFT: A sculpture of Giovanna 'La Baccelli' Zanerini (1753–1801), principal ballerina at the King's Theatre, Haymarket, and mistress of John Sackville, 3rd Duke of Dorset

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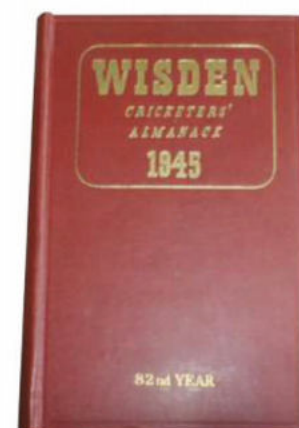
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Cathedrals & Churches

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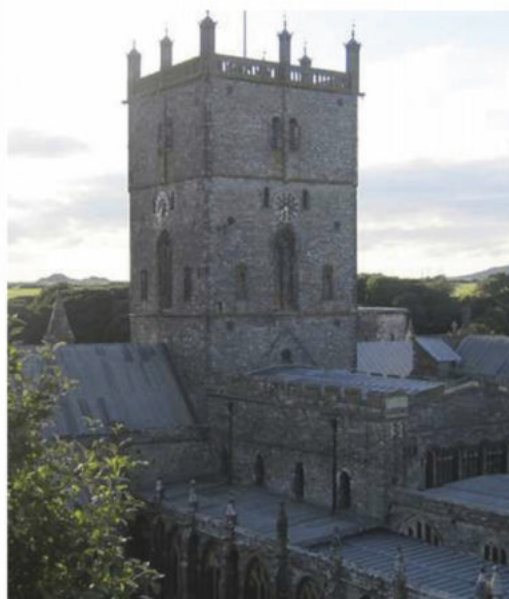
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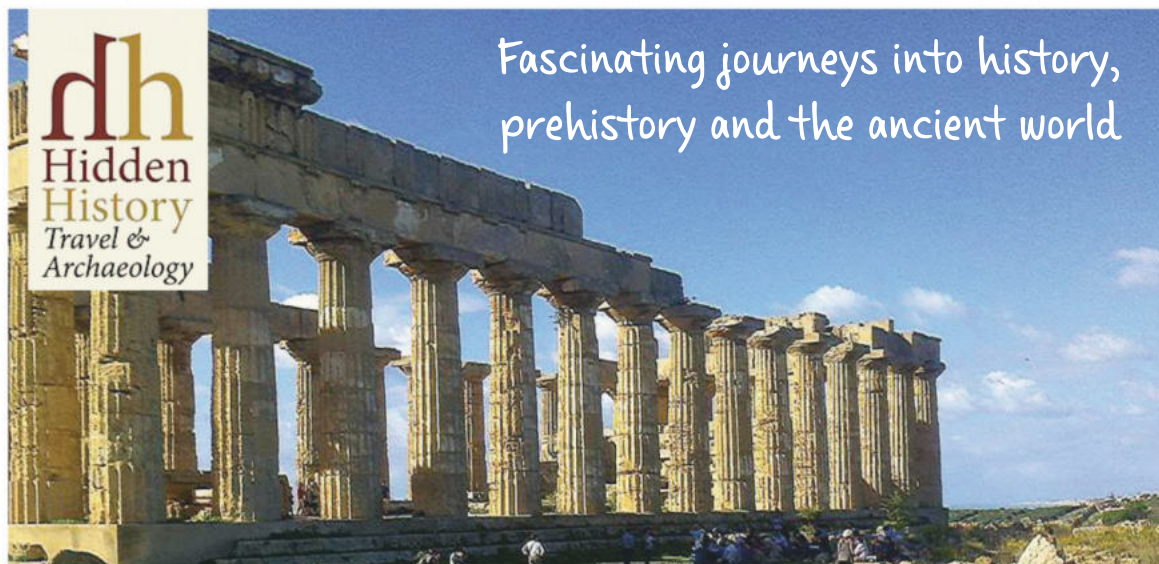


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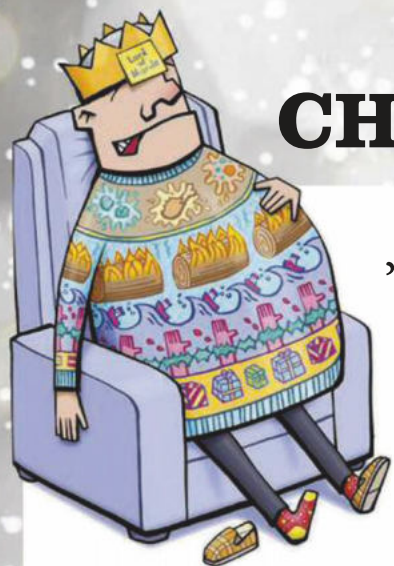
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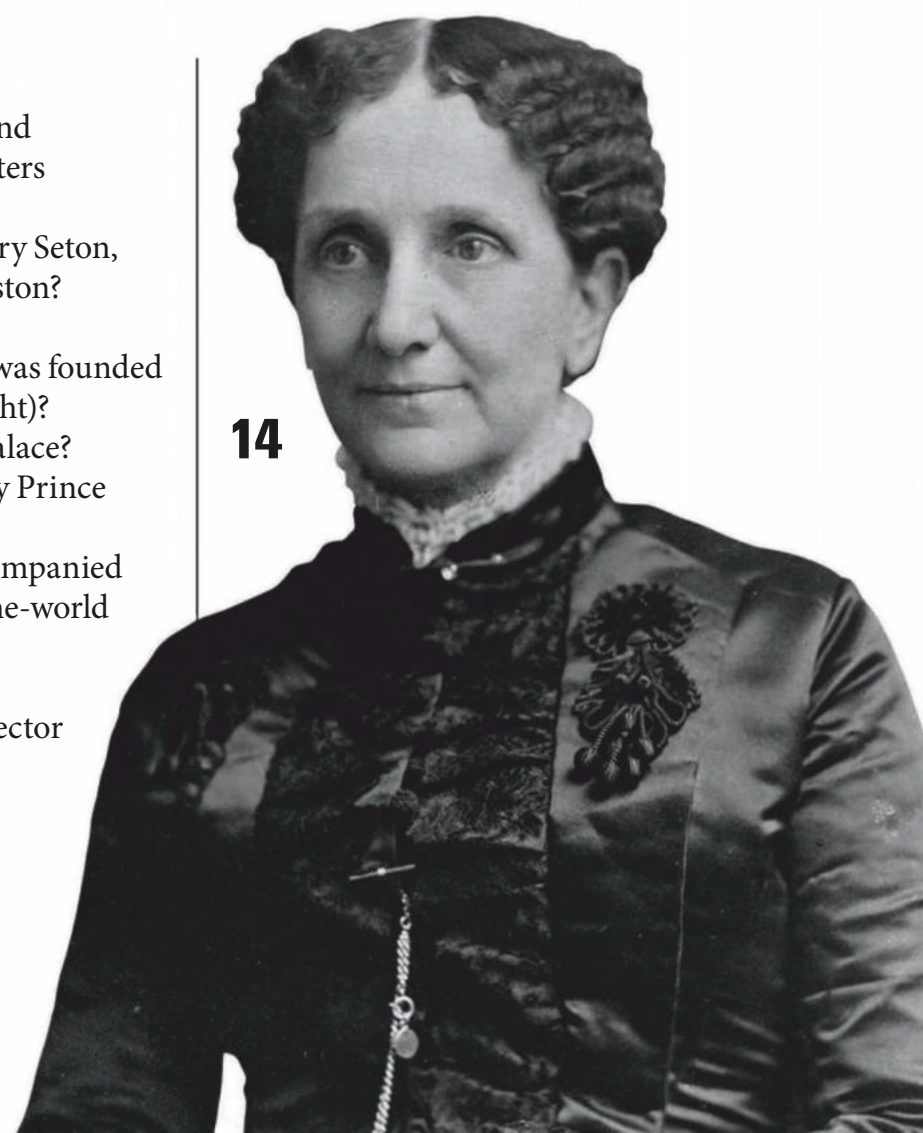
2020 Anniversaries

- 1. 850th** What links William de Tracy, Reginald Fitzurse, Hugh de Morville and Richard le Breton?
- 2. 700th** It was issued in April 1320 and asserted Scottish independence from England. What was it called?
- 3. 600th** Who did King Charles VI of France acknowledge as his heir in May 1420?
- 4. 500th** Who met who at Balinghem near Calais in June 1520?
- 5. 400th** Which ship originally set off with the *Mayflower* on its voyage to the New World but was forced to turn back after being found to be unseaworthy?
- 6. 300th** What burst in the autumn of 1720?
- 7. 250th** Which pottery company, which is celebrating the 250th anniversary of its foundation next year, produced this iconic 'Blue Italian' design (below)?
- 8. 200th** In February 1820 a plot to assassinate the members of the British cabinet was foiled by the authorities. What was it known as?
- 9. 150th** How did Alfred Baker spare English blushes on 5 March 1870?
- 10. 100th** Which scourge of the English was formally canonised in May 1920?



Mary and Joseph

- 11.** Peter Pounce, Mrs Slipslop and Sir Thomas Booby are all characters in which 1742 novel?
- 12.** Who were Mary Beaton, Mary Seton, Mary Fleming and Mary Livingston?
- 13.** Who painted this (above)?
- 14.** Which religious movement was founded in 1879 by Mary Baker Eddy (right)?
- 15.** Who designed the Crystal Palace?
- 16.** What was published by Mary Prince in 1831?
- 17.** Which English botanist accompanied James Cook on his first round-the-world voyage, 1768–71?
- 18.** Mary Anning (1799–1847) of Lyme Regis was a famous collector of what?
- 19.** Who founded the model village of New Earswick near York?
- 20.** Who was Mary of Modena's bonny grandson?



32



History in the news

- 29. What was announced in May as having been discovered during building work near the A2 in Kent?
- 30. Which iconic castle was joined to the mainland by a 70-metre footbridge this summer?
- 31. Which war correspondent and writer was commemorated in September by an English Heritage Blue Plaque on her Knightsbridge flat?
- 32. Known as God's House Tower, this 700-year-old waterfront fortification (left) reopened to the public this autumn after a £3m refurbishment. Where is it?
- 33. What royal piece of fabric went on display at Hampton Court Palace this October? **H**

Eat, drink and be merry

- 21. In which modern-day country would you find the ancient city of Troy?
- 22. Which European capital was severely damaged by a French bombardment in 1695?
- 23. The Duke of Wellington's favourite horse was called Copenhagen. What colour was it?
- 24. Which London lane saw the start of the Great Fire of 1666?
- 25. Which satirical magazine was first published in July 1841?

Three wise men

- 26. "He never said a foolish thing, nor ever did a wise one." Who wrote this about whom?
- 27. Who is said to have been described as "the wisest fool in Christendom"?
- 28. "The trouble with the world is that the stupid are cocksure and the intelligent are full of doubt." Who said this?



24

Quiz Answers

- 2020 Anniversaries
- 1. They murdered Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral in December 1170
- 2. The Declaration of Arbroath
- 3. Henry V of England met Henry VIII of England at the Field of the Cloth of Gold
- 4. Francis I of France
- 5. The Speedwell
- 6. The South Sea Bubble
- 7. Spode
- 8. The Cato Street Conspiracy
- 9. He scored a last-minute equaliser in the first (unofficial) England versus Scotland international football match
- 10. Joan of Arc
- Mary and Joseph
- 11. Joseph Andrews by Henry Fielding
- 12. Ladies-in-waiting to Mary, Queen of Scots
- 13. Joseph Wright of Derby
- 14. The Church of Christ, Scientist
- 15. Joseph Paxton
- Eat, drink and be merry
- 21. Turkey
- 22. Brussels
- 23. Chestnut
- 24. Pudding
- 25. Punch
- Three Wise Men?
- 26. John Wilmot, Stuart
- 16. A brutal account of her life as a slave
- 17. Joseph Banks
- 18. Fossils
- 19. Joseph Rowntree
- 20. Charles Edward
- History in the News
- 29. A Roman industrial town
- 30. Tintagel
- 31. Martha Gellhorn
- 32. Southampton
- 33. A fragment of one of Elizabeth I's dresses

Solution to our November 2019 Crossword

Across: 7 Poole 8 Guernica 10/25 Forbidden City 12 Bronze 13 Coolidge 15 Knossos 17 Molotov 20 Geronimo 22 Spain 24 Acre 26/11/1 Dumbarton Oaks Conference 27 Thatcher 28 Pinta.

Down: 2 Florin 3 Murdoch 4 Franco 5 Hirohito 6 Rack 9 Cicero 14 Groundnuts 16 Stokesay 18 Ossian 19 Tommies 21 Il Duce 23 Artois.

Five winners of Of Gods and Men D Johnson, North Yorkshire; R Fletcher, Bedfordshire; JM Foxall, West Midlands; S Adams, Portree; A Wilson, Greater Manchester

27



PRIZE CROSSWORD

Across

9 The revelations in 1986 of secret illegal weapons deals by the Reagan administration is often referred to as ____ (8)

10 A print produced by a process that was discovered at the end of the 18th century by Alois Senefelder who used limestone as a plate (10)

12 Polynesian archipelago whose inhabitants impressed James Cook with their warm welcome on his 1773–77 visits (5)

13 The 1945 Allied conference here was mainly to discuss the postwar order and the administration of defeated Germany (7)

15 The ancient ruins of Thebes are located in this Egyptian city (5)

16 ____ Win, the Myanmar general (and later prime minister) blamed for the Depayin massacre in May 2003 (3)

17 Louis ____, Frenchman who devised a writing system using raised dots in the 1820s/30s (7)

18 Name applied to eg the B-2 'flying wing' long-range bomber, which first flew in 1989 (7)

20 *A Rake's Progress* was one of the most successful works of this 18th-century satirical English artist (7)

23 This historic overland emigration route stretched more than 2,000 miles westward from Independence, Missouri (6,5)

24 One of the earliest postage stamps, issued in the UK in 1841 (5,3)

25 Popular and victorious Roman general who, after a period of exile, became Rome's second emperor (8)

29 Henry ____, an American historian and the posthumous winner of the 1919 Pulitzer Prize (5)

31 The 'Liberation Tigers' bid to establish an independent ____ state in Sri Lanka was defeated in 2009 (5)

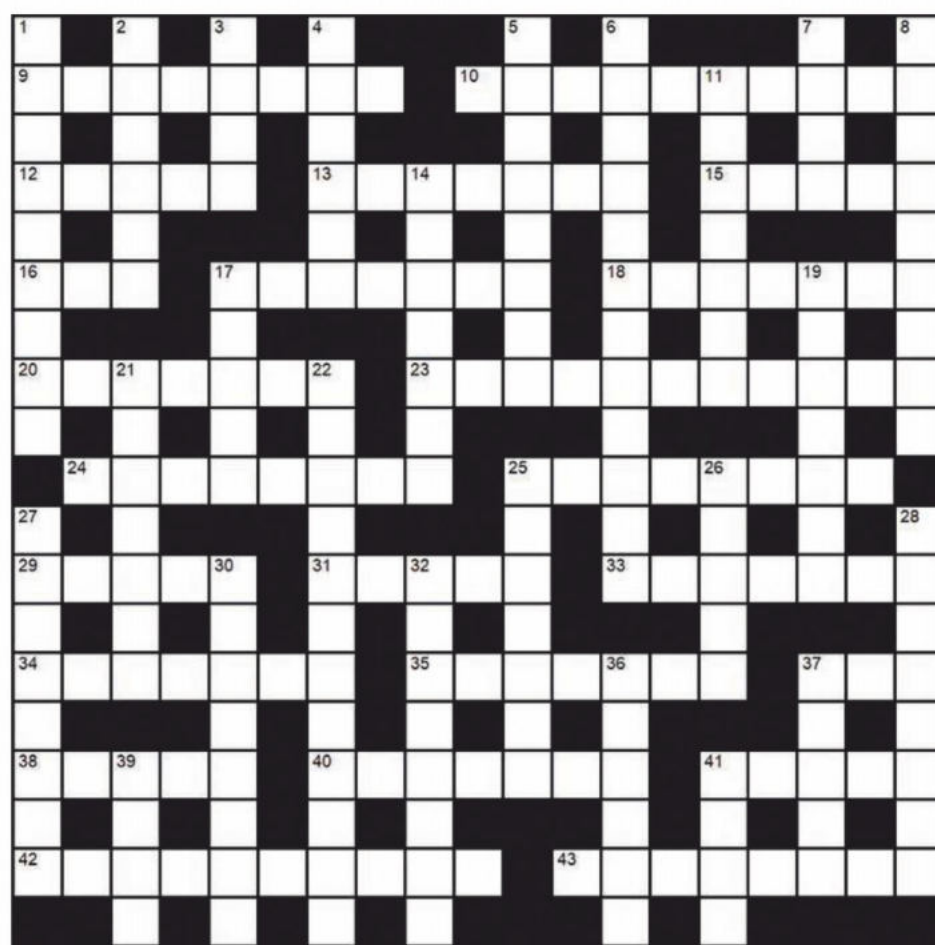
33 Prussia seized most of this historic region during the War of the Austrian Succession (7)

34 Mediterranean port, birthplace of Napoleon Bonaparte (7)

35/26 down Half of a famous partnership, and the first aviator to make a nonstop double crossing of the English Channel (7,5)

37/17 down A nickname of the German pilot of the First World War, who commanded 'Richtofen's Flying Circus' (3,5)

38 Ephesus was a city of this ancient region on the western coast of Anatolia (5)



40 First name of the longest-serving leader of the British Labour party (7)

41 American legendary hero, Daniel ____, who blazed a trail through the Cumberland Gap to Kentucky (5)

42 French physicist, joint winner of the 1903 Nobel Prize for Physics and sole winner of the 1911 Nobel Prize for Chemistry (5,5)

43 A common personification of the United States government, dating back to the War of 1812 (5,3)

Down

1 Influential 19th-century German philosopher who put forward the concept that 'God is dead' (9)

2 Scene of a great victory by Hannibal's forces over the Romans in 216 BC (6)

3 Modern name of the city that was the capital of the India's Mughal empire (4)

4 Celebrated work by Sir Thomas More that was published in 1516 and set on an imaginary island (6)

5 Clarence ____, 20th-century inventor and former fur trader who developed a process for preserving foods by freezing them (8)

6 English political philosopher renowned for his 1651 masterpiece, *Leviathan* (6,6)

7 British architect, Calvert ____, who developed the winning design for New York's

Central Park with American Frederick Olmsted in 1857 (4)

8 John ____, 1st Duke of Marlborough, known for his victory at the battle of Blenheim in 1704 (9)

11 Sir William Schwenck ____, the librettist half of a celebrated 19th-century musical partnership (7)

14 A west Midlands town created in the 1960s, named after a famous 18/19th-century Scottish engineer (7)

17 See 37 across

19 Units of measurement dating back many centuries, equal in English-speaking countries to three statute miles (7)

21 An iconic figure of the Cuban revolution, who later led a guerrilla group in Bolivia, where he was captured and executed in 1967 (7)

22 East Sussex site of a 15th-century castle, which was the headquarters of the Royal Greenwich Observatory from the mid-20th century until 1990 (12)

25 In medieval Europe, the tax imposed by lords on their unfree tenants (7)

26 See 35 across

27 Term applied to the practice of old religious beliefs after the Christianisation of the Roman empire (8)

28 A UN secretary-general and later a



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THE ANSWERS TO OUR NOVEMBER 2019 CROSSWORD ARE ON PAGE 93

(controversial) president of Austria (8)

30 Fifth-century BC Greek philosopher, sentenced to death for impiety (8)

32 In 1900, this French company, in order to promote its products, produced the first of its now world-famous guides to popularise tourism by car (8)

36/41 down Located at Lloyd's of London, this salvaged item was sounded to signal whether ships had returned or been lost (6,4)

37 From 1839 to 1844, Welsh agricultural workers targeted tollgates perceived as a symbol of high tolls and tithes in the Rebecca __ (5)

39 The Imperial War Museum houses the last British gun in action at the battle of ____, September 1914 (4)

41 See 36 down

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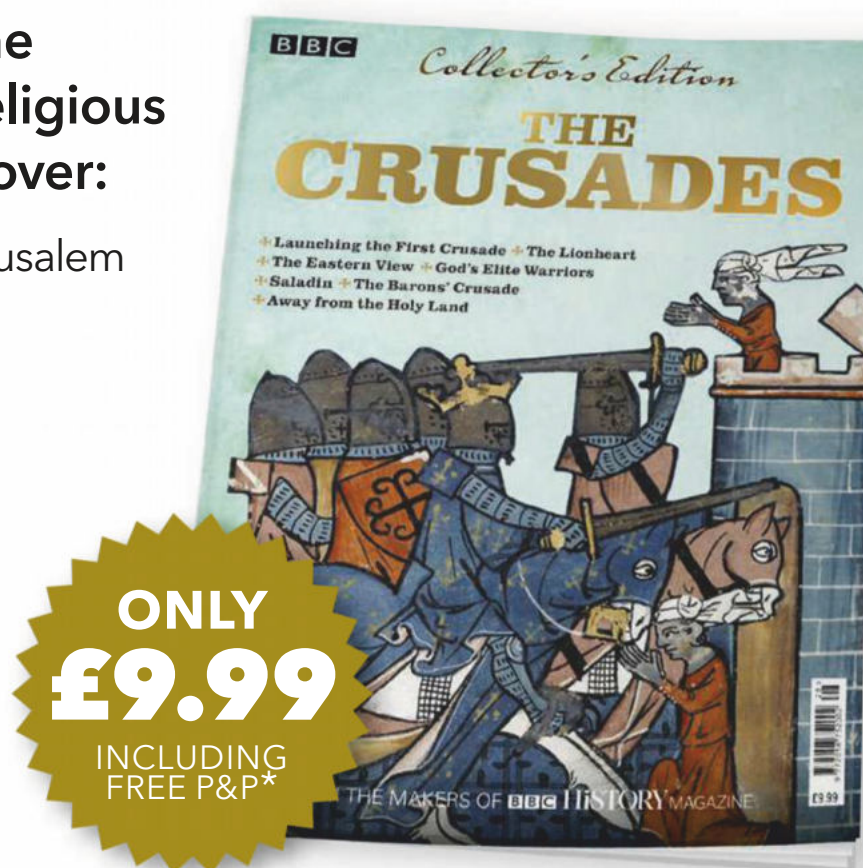
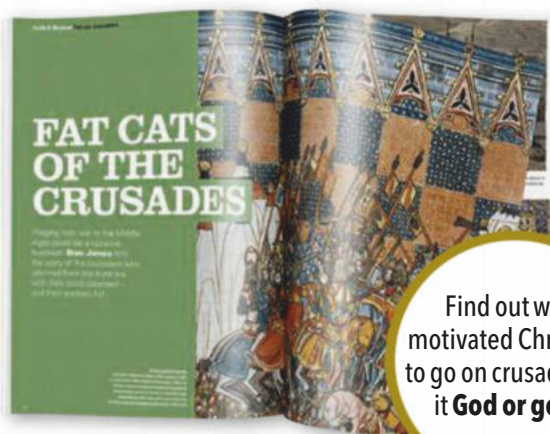
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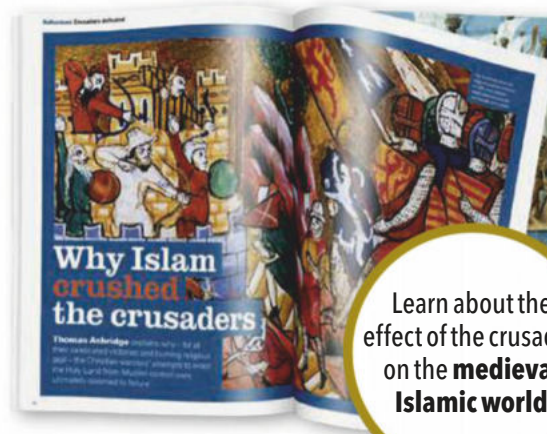
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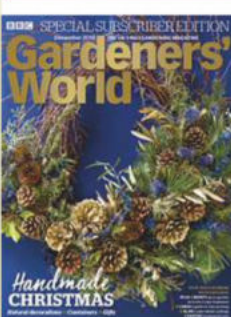


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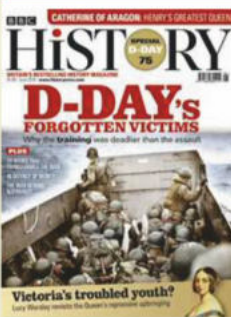


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From rotten boroughs to 47-day elections, the electoral system has, through history, featured a number of quirks and unusual customs, as Sean Lang reveals.

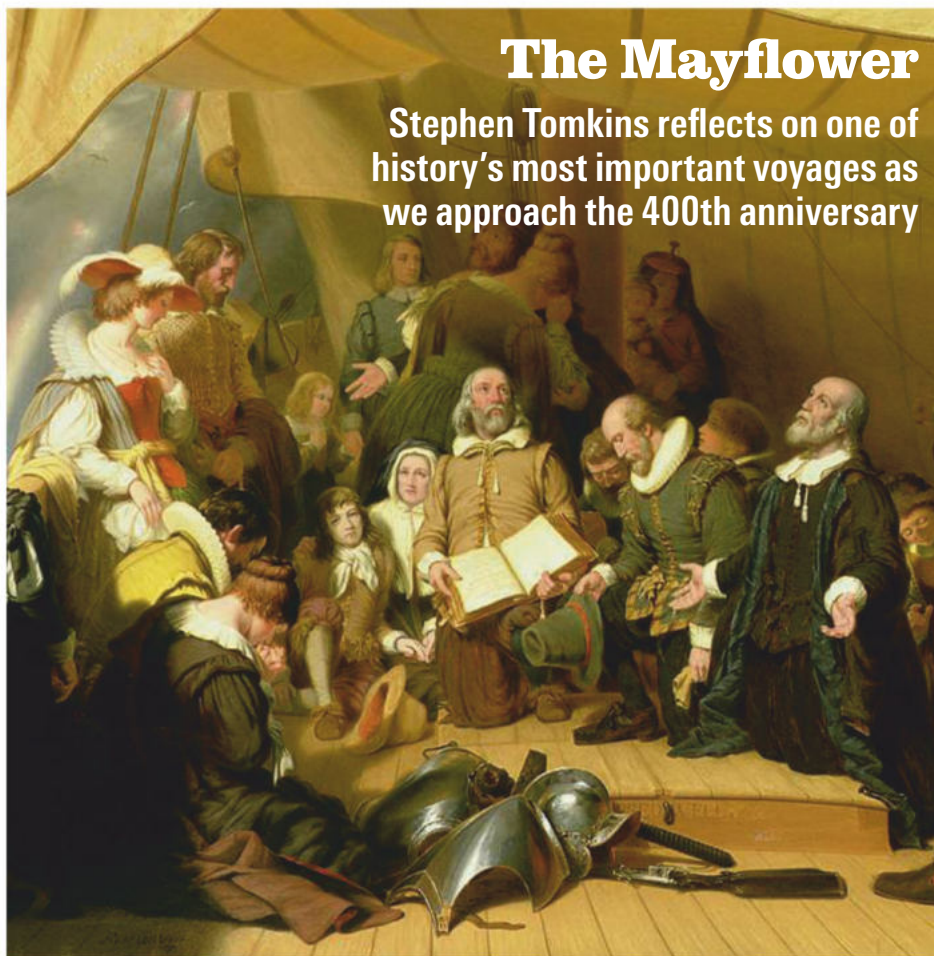
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NEXT MONTH

January issue on sale 27 December 2019

The Mayflower

Stephen Tomkins reflects on one of history's most important voyages as we approach the 400th anniversary



Filthy Middle Ages?

Katherine Harvey questions whether the medieval era really was as unhygienic as we tend to think



Georgian vampire

Richard Sugg tells the dark story of Britain's forerunner of Dracula



Happy Victorians

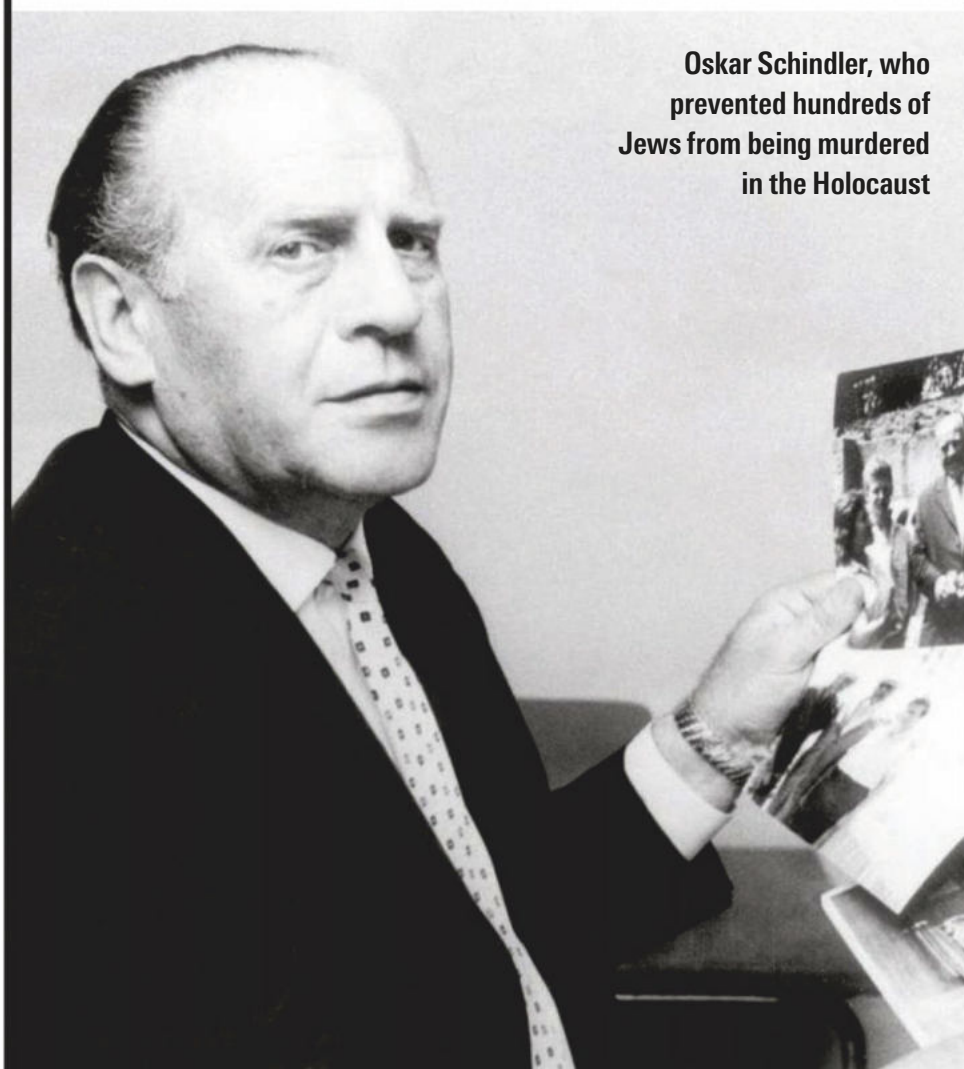
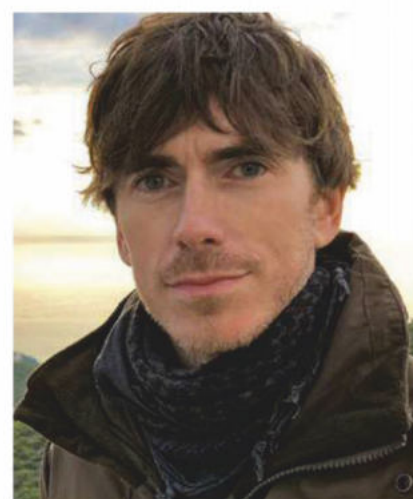
Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones on the more cheerful side of 19th-century Britons

MY HISTORY HERO

Simon Reeve, author, presenter and documentary-maker, chooses

Oskar Schindler

1908-74



Oskar Schindler, who prevented hundreds of Jews from being murdered in the Holocaust

IN PROFILE

Oskar Schindler was a German industrialist (born in what is now the Czech Republic), Nazi Party member and former Abwehr spy who saved as many as 1,200 Jews from almost certain death during the Holocaust. His story was immortalised in the novel *Schindler's Ark* (1982) and the spin-off Oscar-winning film *Schindler's List* (1993). On his death he was buried on Mount Zion, Jerusalem, the only former Nazi Party member to be honoured in this way.

// This is someone who lived at a time of horror and navigated the darkest of waters to save hundreds people //

When did you first hear about Schindler? It was when I was about 13. *Schindler's Ark* [by Thomas Kenneally] was one of our set books at school and it made an enormous impact on me. Our English teacher put it down, saying: "This just might change your lives." In a way it did because it was such an extraordinary story.

What kind of person was he? He was a hugely complicated but extraordinary man – an incredible hero at the same time as being a drunkard and a philanderer. That duality of character only serves to make him a more interesting figure. Good people can do bad things just as bad people can do good things.

What made Schindler a hero? Saving more than a thousand Jewish people from the gas chambers. He found them work in his factories in occupied Poland, and Bohemia and Moravia [present-day Czech Republic], ensuring their survival with the help of his contacts and by paying Nazi officials ever bigger bribes. This is someone who lived at a time of horror and navigated the darkest of waters to save hundreds people.

What was his finest hour? The wartime years when he realised that he wasn't doing enough to save Jews, decided to do more – and went on to save all those lives. He wasn't doing so from the safety of a neutral country, he was doing so from the heart of darkness: German opponents of the Nazi regime were carted off too. Schindler showed just what a difference one person can make, and that is partly why I admire him so much. We might not be able to save the world, but one thing is better than bloody nothing.

Is there anything you don't particularly admire about Schindler? There's nothing I don't admire about him. Yes, we can criticise his philandering in his early life, but let us not forget that he risked his own neck to save others.

Can you see any parallels between his life and your own? None whatsoever – I live at a time of such comparative comfort and have done nothing that could ever hold a light to his life's achievements. But he has helped me to see things on my travels in a different light.

If you could meet Oskar Schindler what would you ask him? I'd love to have known if there was ever a point when Schindler thought that he was on the verge of being rumbled – if he was waiting for the knock on the door. Or was his self-confidence and the lure of the booze powerful enough to make him think he would be okay? **H**
Simon Reeve was talking to York Membery

Simon Reeve has presented acclaimed travel documentaries for the BBC and is the author of *Step by Step* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2019). His show relating his travel adventures tours the UK in 2020 (shootandscribble.com)

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